

Social Media and Learning Behaviour of University Undergraduates in South East Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of social networking on learning behaviour of undergraduates of Universities in South East of Nigeria. Media ecology and social learning theories served as theoretical underpinning, while survey was the research design. The sample size was 378 empirically drawn from a population of 95,866 undergraduate students of the five Federal Universities in South East Nigeria namely: University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Enugu State; Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZK), Awka, Anambra State; Federal University of Technology (FUTO), Owerri, Imo State; Michael Okpara University (MOU), Umuahia, Abia State and Federal University Ndufu Alike-Ikwo (FUNAI), Ebonyi State. Findings show the respondents are well exposed to social networking sites, and the positive influence of the technology on respondents outweigh the negative. The study recommends introduction of social media education as a general study (GST) to promote responsible use of social networking among the students and make the gains more enduring. University authority like UNN should formulate guidelines and regulatory measures against irresponsible use of social networking sites by any undergraduates.

Key words: Influence, Use, Social Networking Sites, undergraduates, learning behaviour

Introduction

Contemporary studies on Information and Communication have revealed that the Internet ecosystem has created a replicate of the physical world through various social networking websites where users send, receive and share their personal information (Snyder, 2010). The Internet world is strongly and magnificently built with facilities that can keep its users busy and updated with the happenings in the world. It is an organized functioning system built with educational, communication, politics, entertainment, economic, social, trade and industry, romance, as well as religious services among others.

Social networking sites are recent phenomena that have experienced tremendous growth in popularity especially among young people. Such sites are changing the way individuals communicate with each other and the world, providing users with a unique computer-mediated environment where individuals are able to disclose their thoughts, feelings, and experiences within their own social network. Today, social networking sites constitute an important research area for scholars interested in online technologies and their social impacts. Researchers from diverse fields have studied the application, implications and practices social networking sites. There has been remarkable growth and increased popularity of social networking sites amongst individuals of all ages, thus highlighting the need for academic study of the phenomenon (Joinson, 2003).

Some cyber networking sites that constitute the Internet ecosystem according to Snyder (2010) include Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Vimeo, Vkontakte, Hyves, Inenti, Dreams Village, Weibo, LinkedIn, Google+, Youtube, Flickr, Skype 2.0, Nurse contact, SOL, Monster, Blogs, Academia.edu, e-learners and My bloom. Others are status updates, photo share, friend list or followers, chat, gaming and internal messaging/email among others. These cyber networking platforms have brought about the emergence of online or cyber community that serves as viable source of information, research and social interactions especially among university undergraduates.

The increasing use of social networking sites by the undergraduates in most universities of the present era has become an issue of serious concern. According to the 2008 Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008, p.6), rapid and continuing advances in information and communication technologies are changing the ways people share, use, develop and process information. This is because, as new technologies are rapidly added to schools, issues are emerging that confront education. The issues include plagiarism, safety, copyright laws, fair use, security, and privacy that are plaguing education everyday (Ribble and Bailey, 2004).

The above issues have continued to raise concerns about how the new found social media platforms influence the learning behaviours of young people especially those in tertiary institutions. A serious intellectual discourse on this matter could contribute to learning and in societal development. But a search for literature on this chosen area revealed paucity of intellectual academic conversations on the subject-matter except for a few on which majority dwelt on nations other than Nigeria. An attempt at filling up this academic gap and knowledge lacuna has prompted this study

Research Objectives

1. To ascertain the extent to which the respondents expose themselves to social networking sites.
2. To determine the extent to which the respondents use social networking sites for academic purposes.
3. To find out gratifications the respondents derive from using social networking sites.
4. To find out the networking sites have on the learning behaviours of the respondents.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do the respondents expose themselves to social networking sites?
2. To what extent do the respondents use social networking sites for academic purposes?
3. What gratifications do the respondents derive from using social networking sites?
4. What kind of influence do social networking sites have on the learning behaviours of the respondents?

Concept of Social Networking Sites

The concept of social networking sites has come to stay in virtually all aspects of human endeavour. They are online group-forming applications, where users can connect to others through shared interests or backgrounds. Demographic and other information is collected for each user and stored in the form of user profiles, which can be shared amongst network members. Thus, networks form as member's link their profiles to other profiles or use the search function to find users with similar interests. Perhaps the most well-known social networking service is Facebook⁹ (<http://www.facebook.com>), which is primarily used to facilitate social interactions, but has increasingly been used by businesses and other organisations to promote their products and encourage discussion among their networks of followers (Boulos and Wheele, 2007).

Social networking sites are defined as virtual communities where users can create public profiles; interact with real- life friends and meet other people based on shared interests. To Arshin (2010), the social networking sites are virtual places where people find themselves and share information. These

social networking sites have an open membership. As soon as one opens an account and uploads his or her data on the profile page, the person is entitled to create a network of friends. However, some social networking sites are specifically designed for mobile phones, some are accessed via computers and others could be accessed using both mobile phones and computers or other information communication technologies.

Nwabueze and Aduba (2014) note that social networking sites are time-consuming as students are gradually becoming addicted to them. The hours and time spent on these sites is enough to be used to acquire knowledge rather such study and useful time is spent social networking. In other words, Nwabueze and Aduba (2014) hold that social networking is taking greater part of students' studying hours and the negative effects abound. Students skip the time to engage in meaningful activities such as reading and utilizing the school library and engage in social activities such as chatting, posting pictures and videos and so on as pointed out by that since the advent of Internet, libraries have witnessed low patronage.

Thus, social networking is the process of finding friends and managing friendships through the Internet. Young further explained that people who wish to meet others put up their most compelling and attractive presentations through their profile pages. Although social networking is possible in persons in the workplace, universities and high schools, it is most popular online. Thus there are number of social networking sites that focus on particular interests and others do not. Researchers and students prefer the use of Internet for their research works.

The emergence and spread of various social media networks and platforms has brought about increase in the usage of cyber networks by various classes of users. According to Adamu (2013), a lot of people are on regular bases, engaged in one internet activity or the other. This is because information and news are being shared among users. The cyber community is a technology-made community which I-Safe (2007) describes as "cyberspace where people interact through electronic means". It is also an online community with faceless citizens that have to live and behave as they wish, such as allowing people to lie or steal more easily than in the physical community. Ukonu, Okoro and Agbo (2013), refer to online or cyber community as visual or Computer-Mediated Community (CMC) that could be formed by any number of individuals by way of the Internet at their own choice or in response to some stimuli.

Nwabueze and Aduba (2014) observe that these social networking sites are so numerous but a few would be mentioned, which include, 2go, friend wise, friend finder, e-buddy, Facebook, Facebook chat, Nimbuzz, Orbit, fubar, classmates, Naijapals, Netlog, Nigerian social network, blackberry messenger, friendster, MySpace, Whatsapp and so on. These social networking sites as stated by Lind and Schatzer (1998) are characterized by interaction, a common purpose, a sense of identity and belonging, various norms and unwritten rules among others and are bound to team and adapt to the community of cyber network in order to make beneficial use of the packages such as videos, charts, SMS etc. The appearance of the user to adapt to the existing user condition of the cyber invariably brought about the idea of cyber citizenship or digital citizenship.

The nature of the social networking sites is flexible, easy and open to any interested user with no limitations or restriction as to which social networking sites one should belong; one can be a member of as many as possible. While the social networking sites have the same key aspects, the cultures and responses around them that become apparent are varied. Most sites help strangers connect with others based on shared personal interests, political and economic views, or simply recreational activities. Some sites accommodate distinct viewers, while others attract people based on similarities, such as common languages or shared racial, sexual, religious, or nationality-based identities. Nonetheless, social networking sites have only one common goal.

From available research evidences, it could be firmly stated that the nature of social networking sites to some extent, is to encourage new ways to communicate and share information. It also provide great opportunities for members including secondary school students and Librarians who use it to promote the services of the library and also get first class information about their users through interacting with them. The students on the other hand benefit from some of the postings in some sites because some postings can be informative and educative and the students after reading such posts can comment on them (Nwabueze and Aduba, 2014).

Uses and Influence of Social Networking Sites

The ideal basis for the use of social networking sites was developed on the principle of responsible and ethical use of the cyber networking sites. Ribble, Bailey and Ross (2004) said cyber citizenship has become a priority for schools to see technology integration as a major teaching and learning strategy for preparing students to live and work in the 21st century. It is quite a good and acceptable way of using the internet in obedience and adherent to the rules, regulations, ethics and etiquettes guiding the virtual community. In support of this, Ribble, Bailey and Ross (2004) maintain that digital citizenship addresses appropriate technology behaviour with a view of fighting against the increasing misuse and abuse of emerging technologies in schools.

Dialogue (2012) introduced Citizenship Model that centres on social justice, empathy and social responsibility. Cyberspace users are at liberty and free to communicate with friends, play games, listen to music and socially network with others especially the undergraduates who are away and independent from their parents have no time limit to visit cyber community. What is needed is a practical agenda that will mitigate incidents of unacceptable computer and network use and provide students with skills necessary to optimize the value of technology at school.

Ribble, Bailey and Ross (2004) give three principles to responsible cyber citizen among students: these are:

1. Students should understand the ethical, cultural and social issues related to technology.
2. Students should practice responsible use of technology systems, information and software.
3. Students should develop positive attitudes toward technology applications that support lifelong learning, collaboration, personal pursuits and productivity.

The above principles can guide the students to adapt to the nine general areas of cyber space and cyber citizenship behaviour. They are; etiquette, communication, education, access, commerce, responsibility, rights, safety and security. Therefore the idea of cyber citizenship in the present age is “will prepare students to use that technology safely, legally and ethically in school systems as well as socially and professionally.” To be digital citizen is to be a good, legal, ethical and responsible user of the cyber networks.

Teicher (2002) reveals that the adoption, of cyber citizenship by social networking sites users/students is important in this “ever-changing electronic environment where many students are not fully aware of what constitutes responsible and legal behaviour and where the ability of one individual to impact in millions of lives is possible”. A good social networking sites user is one who according to Netsafe (2010):

- i. • is a confident and capable user of a variety of forms of ICT
- ii. • uses technologies to participate effectively in educational, cultural and economic activities
- iii. • uses and develops critical thinking skills about online material and dynamics
- iv. • understands and uses the language, symbols, and texts of digital technologies

- v. • is aware of the range of ICT challenges, including the need to self-protect and stay safe online, and can manage them effectively
- vi. • uses ICT to collaborate with, and relate socially to others positively and respectfully
- vii. • demonstrates integrity and ethical behaviour in their use of ICT and acknowledges the rights of others

New and ever-improving technologies can be used to build positive peer relationships but also to enhance student engagement and learning e.g:

- viii. • Students can use mobile phones to take photographs during a science experiment or nature walk to incorporate into a report or project; they use blogs, forums and video-sharing sites to enhance writing skills and creativity
- ix. • Schools can install customised online social network platforms such as ‘Ning’ to create a community in which students can communicate, collaborate on a project and discuss/share their work with each other through the use of blogs and forums
- x. • Email can be used by students to communicate with students in other schools and/or other countries as an opportunity for language development as well as research
- xi. • Students can use a wiki to plan a school event
- xii. • Students can create an e-portfolio, a computer program, a spreadsheet to keep track of money raised for charity or develop creative products using multimedia and multimodal programs such as Digital Story Telling or Claymation animations

Social Networking Sites and Influence on Learning Behaviour

The available evidence (although still small and not always consistent) suggests that the incorporation of ICT into learning activities has a positive effect on students in terms of their motivation and engagement with learning and their learning outcomes. Additionally, a review of research studies identified other positive outcomes such as increased student collaboration, more persistence and increases in on-task behaviour. Higher order thinking is more likely to occur when students collaborate or discuss their ideas and views in small groups where there are opportunities to debate, challenge and see multiple perspectives (Ashton & James, 2008).

However there are also concerns about the use of ICT by young people that need to be addressed. For example, at the same time as they are discovering the satisfaction that can be derived from being part of this online culture, they are experimenting with risk-taking and moral issues. They are still maturing in their capacity to manage their explorations and make good decisions based on moral and consequential thinking. They are also relatively naïve about the power and implications of online communication. Omekwu and Odoh (2014) revealed that the popularity of social networks grows rapidly by the second. These social sites have become effective (to an extent) means of communicating ideas and feelings among their users. Thus, they are beginning to get more attention from educational institutions. In this line of view, opined that institutions are taking drastic steps to educate students on the use of the sites, especially in the areas of the privacy, legal issue and potential socio-economic and psychological dangers.

Social networking enhances a student’s sense of community, sharing and collaboration brings an additional responsibility and workload, which some students find inflexible and rather “forced”. This technology uses web cams or voice-only software to hold virtual seminars online. To Omekwu and Odoh (2014), this is extremely useful for collaborations where, the partners live in different parts of the globe. Through the use of social networking sites students are able to express themselves, communicate and collect profiles that highlight their talent and experience., The researchers reported that, ‘students are using Facebook and other channels to develop their identities, beliefs and stances on various issues such as politics, religion, economy and work, as well as to pioneer and develop intimate relationships.’

From the above review, one can agree with the report of Cyberbully Research Center, that two-third of teens go online every day to complete school work, communicate with friends, play games, listen

to music and socially network with others. This is done without license or permission from anybody. Students especially the undergraduates who are away and independent from their parents have no time limit to visit cyber community. Hollandsworth, Dowdy and Donovan (2011) were of the view that teens are connected to technology 24/7 which means that more teens are at risk to becoming either aggressor or the victim of cyber bullying. Many of them login daily thereby making it their social activity whether good or bad.

Empirical Review

Social Networking Sites and Students' Learning Behaviour

In a research of 80 set of questionnaires randomly distributed to undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia by Waleed and Mohd (2014) on the Impact of Social Media use on Academic Performance among university students: A Pilot Study, it was discovered that: to acquire a general satisfaction of social media since it encourages and facilitates student utilization of social media for collaborative learning, and boost the education and experience with a students. In terms of interactivity with peers on social media and acquired a higher percentage when it comes to students' academic performance at University since it influences it to be simple for student to go over questions along with other students through social media It is easy to networking with peers and interact with them because it is the same age, class and education level.

Following the increasing rate of use of the social networking sites, Al-Tarawneh (2014) had his study on the Influence of Social Networks on Students' Performance. The result shows that majority of students especially in higher institutions of learning made use of social network in order to keep or maintain their social relationship. It further reveals that a lot of students especially the undergraduates expose themselves to one platform of social networking sites or the other through friends in social gathering and discussing atmosphere.

McQuail (2005) states that the use of social networking sites offers new opportunities for cross social and cultural boundaries. In relation to this view, Lavy and Sand (2014) carried out a study on the Effect of Social Networks on Student's Academic and Non-Cognitive Behavioral Outcomes and discovered that there is relatively large effect of the various social networks; the presence of reciprocal friends in class has a positive and significant effect on test scores in English, Maths, and Hebrew and adding one such friend in class raises the student's average test scores by 0.095 standard deviation of the test scores distribution. This relatively large effect is however limited to the first circle of such friends, while any extensions of this social network have no effect on the academic performance of students. The presence of followers also has significant positive effects on student outcomes.

Eke, Omekwu and Odoh (2014) carried out a study on The Use of Social Networking Sites among the Undergraduate Students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka and discovered that the purposes for using social networking sites by UNN undergraduate students are many but of positive results. The findings of this study show that UNN undergraduate students use social networking sites for different purposes and the sites often favour them. The investigation revealed that UNN undergraduate students use the social networking sites to communicate with friends, watching movies, for discussing national issues like politics, economy and religious matters, and for academic purposes.

This finding of Omekwu and Odoh (2014) research further shows that students do have brainstorm on national issues via the social networking sites. This will be used for them to generate ideas that can be implemented for the good of the nation. In this study with respect to research question four, it was revealed that one of the benefits of using social networking sites is that it helps in research and learning. This is in line with the view of Brennan (2001) and Notley (2010) that 'social network help in the school and universities to leverage and complement formal education learning outcomes.

From the above empirical review, it was observed that social networking sites have become a popular and available media of communication for social and academic purposes especially among youths which are mainly students of higher institutions of learning like university. The review showed that the use of social networking sites contribute in influencing positive learning behaviour of university undergraduates. It is therefore on this ground that the choice and adoption of Media Ecology Theory (MET) and Social Learning Theory (SLT) as theoretical frameworks of this study become imperative.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two theories. They are Media Ecology Theory (MET) and Social Learning Theory. They were selected and adopted as foundational bases for studying the problem of this study because of their relevance and suitability. The media ecology theory was propounded by Neil Postman who used the concept in 1988 at an address in America. According to Castells (2002) in Amana and Attah (2014, p.26) “media ecology means an environment in which culture grows”. The medium becomes a technological environment. This is made possible by the employment and engagement of new media forms and fashions into new form of cultural life.”

The focus of media ecology theory is to see the media as an existing environment for habitation just like the physical world and how they affect human perception, understanding, feeling and values (Postman, 2013). This theory has a functional and useful relationship with this study in the sense that social networking sites constitute an online place of habitation (web) for the users where they pass and share their messages and feelings. Thus, its application to this study rests on the notion that cyber space is a media environment. Theory will help in the understanding of the influence of cyber space on the learning behaviour of university undergraduate students.

Related to the above theory and applied to this study is the social learning theory. This theory was propounded in 1977 by Albert Bandura. He states that behaviour is learnt from the environment through the process of ostentation learning. With the arrival of the new/social media that operate through cyber space, Heyman (2014) notes that it is a pretty safe statement where social technologies (social networks, blogs, mobile devices and collaborative platforms) are now more than a fad and will be sticking around for the foreseeable future.

The social learning has increased the use of cyber technologies such as Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Google; Twitter etc. social networking sites constitute an online place, space or community of social interactions for learning. In relation this study, the theories provide bases for examining the social and academic interaction that bring students together and consequently influence of the use of cyber space on the learning behaviour of undergraduates Federal Government owned universities in South East Nigeria.

Research Methodology

Survey research method was adopted for this study since it involves obtaining the opinions of the undergraduates of universities in South Eastern zone of Nigeria on the influence of the use of cyberspace on the learning behaviour of undergraduates of selected universities in South East Nigeria. Survey is considered appropriate for this study for in the words of Okoro (2001) surveys are useful in the measurement of public opinion, attitudes and orientation which are dominant among a large population at a particular period.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises all the undergraduate students of the five Federal Government owned universities in South East of Nigeria. According to statistics from the National

Universities' Commission, (<http://www.nuc.edu.ng>); students' record from the Academic Planning Unit and supported figures from different portals of these universities at the time of this study was UNN 29,214, UNIZIK 23,723, FUNAI 7,015, MOU 17,801 and FUTO 18,113. These figures put together gave a total of 95, 866 population size of this study.

In determining the sample size of an indefinite population size of this nature, the researcher purposefully adopted the Meyer sample size determination formula. Meyer (1973) presents a population and sample size range for studies. The table contains the range from 1000 to infinity. The infinite population column as shown in the table below has a sample size of 385 is chosen. This forms the sample size of the undergraduate students of the five selected universities in South East of Nigeria under study. Meyer Population and sample sizes determination table for this study is presented below.

Table 1: Population and sample sizes as determined by Meyer

S/N	Population	Sample Size
1	Infinity	385
2	500,000	384
3	100,000	383
4	50,000	381
5	10,000	370
6	5,000	357
7	3,000	341
8	2,000	322
9	1,000	278

Meyer (1973) sample size determination formula

Sampling Technique

This study adopted multi-stage sampling technique. First, cluster simple sampling technique was used in selecting five Federal universities registered by National Universities Commission in South East Nigeria. They are University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Enugu State; Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZK), Awka, Anambra State; Federal University of Technology (FUTO), Owerri, Imo State; Michael Okpara University (MOU), Umuahia, Abia State and Federal University Ndufu Aleke-Ikwo (FUNAI), Ebonyi State.

In stage two, the researcher used purposive sampling technique to select five faculties from each of the universities. Thus the following faculties were selected: Arts and Humanities; Management Sciences; Social Sciences; Physical Sciences and Law.

Accordingly, five departments were randomly selected; one from each of the five faculties and the following departments emerged: Mass Communication; Marketing; Philosophy; Computer Science and Civil Law from Faculty of Law. The sample size was distributed among the students of this departments and their opinion sought on the influence of the use of cyber space on their learning behaviour.

Simple sampling technique was used in selecting individual respondents/undergraduates from the selected departments under study.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected from the respondents through the administration of copies of questionnaire to respondents. Questionnaire was designed in line with the research questions and administered to the sample size of the study on one-on-one, face-to-face or personal contact bases to the respondents. The essence of this is to ensure safe handling, maximum response and return of filled copies of the questionnaire.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

Data collected from the respondents were analyzed with simple percentage method and results subjected to descriptive analysis for easy interpretation and understanding. Out of 385 copies of questionnaires, 378 were dully filled and returned while 7 lost in transit. This gave us 98.2% of returned questionnaire. The analysis and findings were presented below as follow:

Table 1: Information about undergraduates of selected universities in South East Nigeria

S/N	Respondent's Bio-data	Variable/option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Sex of respondents	Males	148	39.2
		Females	230	60.8
		Total	378	100.0%
2	Age Bracket	17-20 years	82	21.7
		21-24 years	101	26.7
		25-27 years	134	35.4
		28-30 years	61	16.2
		Total	378	100.0%
4	Level/Year of Study	Year One	66	17.5
		Year Two	79	20.9
		Year Three	115	30.4
		Year Four	118	31.2
		Total	378	100.0%
5	Course/Dept of Study	Mass Communication	95	25.1
		Marketing	95	25.1
		Computer Science	94	24.4
		Civil Law	94	24.4
		Total	378	100.0%
6	Universities of Study	UNN-Enugu State	80	21.2
		UNIZIK- Anambra State	78	20.6
		MOUU-Abia State	75	19.8
		FUTO- Imo State	75	19.8
		FUNAI- Ebonyi State	70	18.6
		Total	378	100.0%

The above table contains the bio-data of the respondents on this study. Areas captured in their bio-data included their sex, age bracket, level or year of study and course/programme of study. On the respondents' sex, the findings revealed that 39.2% of them which made 148 numbers of the respondents were males while the females had 60.8%. By this, the number of females used in the study was more than those of the males. On the age bracket of the respondents, 21.7% were within 17-20 years, 26.7% were

within the age bracket 21-24 years, while 35.4% were within the age bracket of 25-27 years and 16.2% were those between 28-30 years. Among these students, 25.1% were selected from the department of Mass Communication, another 25.1% from Marketing while 24.4% were selected from the departments of Computer Science and Law of the five universities under study.

Research question No.1: To what extent do the undergraduates of selected universities in South East Nigeria expose themselves to social networking sites? Questions number 6, 7 and 8 in the questionnaire were used in answering the above research question. Details are shown in tables 2, 3 and 4 below.

Table 2: Respondent's exposure to social networking sites?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	378	100
No	Nil	Nil
Total	378	100%

The data from the above table showed that all the 378(100%) students sampled exposed themselves to social networking sites.

Table 3: Respondent's extent of exposure to networking sites?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
At least once a day	45	11.90
At least twice a day	95	25.13
Several times a day	215	56.88
Not sure of times	23	6.08
Total	378	100%

The data in the above table showed that 45(11.90%) of the students visit the social networking sites at least once a day; 95(25.13%) do so at least twice a day; 215(56.88%) do so several times a day while 23(6.08%) said that they do not know how many times they do so in a day. This means that at least 310(82.01%) visited the social networking sites at least twice daily.

Table 4: Average time respondents often spend during each session online?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Up to one hour	213	56.34
Up to two hours	78	20.63
Less than an hour	20	5.29
Several hours	67	17.72
Total	378	100%

Data in the table above table showed that 213(56.34%) of the students spent up to one hour per session in the social networking site; 78(20.63%) spend up to two hours per session; 20(5.29%) spend less than an hour per session while 67(17.72%) spent several hours per session in the social networking site. This means that cumulatively, the students spent long hours visiting the social networking sites.

In view of the above answers obtained from the students; we conclude that the students not only exposed themselves frequently to the social networking sites, they spent long hours doing so.

Research Question 2: Do the undergraduate students use social networking sites for academic purposes?

Questions number 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 114 in the questionnaire were used to answer the research question 2 as presented in table 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 below.

Table 5: What respondents mainly use the social networking sites for?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Play music	17	4.49
Chat with friends	70	18.52
Watching videos	87	23.01
Academic purposes	204	53.97
Total	378	100%

The data in above table showed that though, students use the social networking sites for different purposes, majority of them (204 or 53%) use the sites for academic purposes.

Table 6: To what extent do you use the social networking sites for academic purposes?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
To a large extent	127	33.59
To a very large extent	210	55.55
To a small extent	51	13.49
Not at all	Nil	Nil
Total	378	100%

On the extent of their use of the social networking sites for academic purposes, 127(33.59%) say that they use them to a large extent while 210(55.55%) said that they use them to a very large extent. Given the data from the three tables, we concluded that the students use the social networking sites to a very large extent in their academic works.

Table 7: In what areas of academics do you mostly use the social networking sites for?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gathering information	45	11.90
Research purposes	198	52.38
Exchanging academic materials	84	22.22
Interacting with other students	41	10.84
Total	378	100%

Data in the above table showed that 198(52.38%) use the social networking sites for research purposes while 84(22.22%) students use them mostly for exchange of academic materials. This shows that the students employed the social networking sites extensively for academic purposes.

Table 8: Does your use of social networking sites influence your learning behaviour?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	378	100
No	Nil	Nil
Total	378	100%

Table 9: To what extent does the use the social networking sites influence your learning behaviour?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
To a large extent	127	33.59
To a very large extent	210	55.55
To a small extent	51	13.49
Not at all	Nil	Nil
Total	378	100%

On the extent to which their use of the social networking sites influenced their learning behaviour, 127(33.59%) say that they use them to a large extent while 210(55.55%) said that they use them to a very large extent. Given the data from the three tables, we concluded that the students use the social networking sites to a very large extent in their academic works.

Research Question 3: What are the major gratifications students derive from visiting the social networking sites?

This research question was answered using questions number 14 and 15 in the questionnaire. Their responses are presented in table 10 and 11 below.

Table 10: Are there some gratifications you obtain from visiting these social networking sites/spaces?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	316	83.59
No	Nil	Nil
Not sure	62	16.40
Total	378	100%

Data from the table above showed that 316(83.59) students agreed that there are different gratifications they get from use of the social networking sites; none of them disagreed while 62(16.40%) of them were not sure if they do get gratifications or not.

Table11: What are the major gratifications you obtain from visiting these social networking sites?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Pleasure	45	11.90
Academic intelligence	215	56.88
Knowledge	47	12.43
Social relationship	71	18.78
Total	378	100%

Data in table 9 above showed that 215(56.88%) students said that the major gratification they obtain from the use of the social networking sites was enhancement of their academic intelligence; 71(18.78%) said it was social relationship from the use of the sites while 47(12.43%) said that it increases their knowledge. Going by the data obtained from the two tables, it can be seen that the students obtained different gratifications from the use of the social networking sites and that the main gratification is academic intelligence followed by building of social relationships.

Research Question 4: What kind of influence does the exposure to social networking sites have on these students learning behaviour?

Questions number 16 and 17 in the questionnaire were used in answering the above research question as presented in table 12 and 13 below.

Table 12: What specific kind of influence has the exposure to social networking sites had on you?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Made me more intelligent	198	52.38
Less inclined to read books	15	3.96
More interested in academics	92	24.33
Broaden my academic horizon	73	19.31
Total	378	100%

Data in above table showed that 198(52.38%) said that exposure to social networking sites has made them more intelligent; 15(3.96%) said it has made them less inclined to read books; 92(24.33%) said it has made them more interested academics; while 73(19.31%) said it has broaden their academic horizons. From the above, we can infer exposure to social networking sites has not only had specific influence on the students, but it has generally improved the intelligence of the students.

Table 13: Does your exposure to social networking sites influence your learning behaviour positively?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	297	78.57
No	33	8.73
I can't say	48	12.70
Total	378	100%

Data from the table above showed that 297(78.57%) agree that exposure to social networking sites has had positive influence on them; 33(8.73%) said it has not had any influence on them while 48(12.70%) can't say whether it has or not. This shows that the learning behaviour of majority of the students had been positively influenced by their exposure to social networking sites.

Discussion of Findings

This study was carried out to ascertain the influence of the use of social networking sites on learning behaviour of undergraduates of universities in South East Nigeria. To find out this, the level of university students' exposure to social networking sites in their learning environment was considered. This is where and when the principles of media ecology as stated by Amana and Attah (2014) come into play and appropriate for the study.

The findings from research question number one revealed that all the students (378 or 100%) exposed themselves to social networking sites. The students' level of cyber citizenship is becoming significant especially in UNN where the students had higher exposure to social networking sites compliance in their use of online resources. There was evidence of responsible use of social networking sites by some students of the universities. As a result of this, social networking sites have positive influence on undergraduate students' learning behaviour in spite of some minor instances of irresponsible social networking sites usage by some undergraduates.

Findings from research question number two showed that 198(52.38%) used the social networking sites for research purposes while 84(22.22%) students use them mostly to get academic materials and information on social behaviours. This is in line with the findings of Eke, Omekwu and Odoh (2014) that UNN undergraduate students use the social networking sites to communicate with

friends, watching movies, for discussing national issues like politics, economy and religious matters, and for academic purposes.

The findings made from research question number three showed that the students obtained some gratifications from the use of the social networking sites. This confirms that social networking sites for both academic, social cum pleasures purposes for building conventional and online relationship. This is supported by Waleed, M. A and Mohd, S.O. (2014).in their findings that students especially at higher level of learning can function collaboratively through exploring the opportunities given by online social atmosphere to resolve certain academic issues or issues with their peers

Findings from research question number four showed that 198(52.38%) said that exposure to social networking sites has made them more intelligent; 15(3.96%) said it has made less inclined to learn; 92(24.33%) said it has made them more interested academics; while 63(16.66%) said it has broaden their academic horizon. From this, we can agree with Andreas M. Kaplan, & Haenlein, M. (2010) that exposure to social networking sites has not only had specific influence on the students, but it has generally improved the intelligence of the students. This is indicative that through collaborative or team learning social media can establish positive contact, using the goal of working towards particular final results, both in offline and online modes.

From the findings so far, majority of the students agreed that their engagement in cyber networking activities influenced their learning behaviour in school. In this case, there is change in the learning behaviour of the university undergraduates under study due to their exposure, access and utilization of cyber network services and products. Also, the level of the students' involvement in the use of social networking sites significantly influenced a proportionate positive learning behaviour and vice versa. This result is in line with the findings of Acholonu (2013) and Haruna and Danladi (2013). They agreed that social media such as facebook influences the attitude and behaviour of youths.

Implications of Findings

There is no doubt that in spite of the erroneous perceptions on the negative influence of social networking sites on youths, this study shows that majority of the users or visitors of social networking sites who are undergraduates are not only guided by rules, duties, rights and privileges to make informed decision that will promote the welfare of the online community, they also have access to information that would affect their learning and social behaviour in their various disciplines and areas of concern. This is against the notion that social networking sites have been flooded with infidelity because of the freeways users enter the social networking sites /community, do one or two things and go scot-free.

This study clearly shows that there possibilities and opportunities of making a responsible use of social networking sites or online community resources, especially by university undergraduates. This is possible by serving as a medium for sharing learning ideas and inculcating positive learning behaviours in their academics. Thus, this study proves that there is a significant correlation between what students do in the net and their learning behaviour.

It is therefore practical that the use of social networking sites or virtual community by university undergraduates has come to stay. Modern technology is making it easier for academicians to detect unethical practices such as plagiarism and copyright infringement. The governments bar access to some web pages, all with the aim of protecting and monitoring activities online. It is equally the findings of this study that some undergraduate students are beginning to understand and appreciate their rights and responsibilities in the cyber world. The more they engage in cyber activities for their academic and social needs, the more their learning behaviour is getting shaped in line with the basic principles guiding the use of social networking sites.

Conclusion

Impressively, there is an appreciable positive influence of social networking sites usage on the learning behaviour of undergraduate students of Universities in South East Nigeria. This result stands especially in collaboration with the conclusions of Bennett (2005) that every day, middle level students use technology, so educators must stay abreast of the social, legal and ethical issues surrounding technology and to infuse social networking sites into instruction. Bennett stresses further that using social networking sites or cyberspace network is a new aspect of online or social networking sites education that needs to be infused through a school to the students.

Recommendations

The recommendations of this study are anchored on the findings made. As a result of the association or relationship between the use of social networking sites and undergraduate students' learning behaviour, this study recommends that Social Networking Sites Education should be introduced and encouraged to stand as one of the General Studies (GST) courses that would provide undergraduate students with the principles, rules, ethics and ideology of social networking sites usage in university education. This will certainly improve their knowledge and using experience of social networking sites in relation to their learning and social behaviour in their universities.

The Universities' authorities should collaborate with National Technology Education, Information and Communication Technology agencies and other media and security agencies to create and implement policies that will improve and sustain the existing good and responsible influence of social networking sites by the undergraduates in South East universities.

Appropriate bodies and authorities should adequately enforce legal and ethical online practices that will make the undergraduate students of other universities cue to achieve standard academic learning behaviour. These will also guide against plagiarism, copyright, fake and sharp academic practices especially when students are given assignments to do in their schools. In all, the university community has the potentials of sustaining positive socio-learning cum academic behaviour of their students.

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