The Effect of Social Networking Sites on Academic Performance of Students of Abia State Polytechnic, Aba

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Abstract: This research has presented the effect of social networking sites (SNSs) on academic performance of students of Abia State Polytechnic, Aba. Social networking sites allows the users to share information with selected group of family members, friends or associates. In this study, an attempt is made to obtain the perception of students on how the use of SNSs impacts on their academic performance. A preliminary survey was conducted for a sample of 100 students drawn from National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) of Abia State Polytechnic, Aba. The aim was to obtain findings on their use of SNSs and the effect on their academic life. Data collected was analyzed using the Microsoft Excel package. The research observed that most of the participants who responded to questions confirmed that SNSs positively impacts their academic performance especially in terms of discussion with classmate, communication with supervisor or lecturer, and for sharing assignments. It is suggested that polytechnics and institutions of higher learning in Nigeria could explore the general acceptability and positive impact of SNSs and incorporate it as part of learning process.

Keywords: Academic Performance, SNSs, Abia State Polytechnic, Impact

1. Introduction

Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are web sites that allow their users or members to share –send or receive information with selected group of friends or associates. The emergence of Social Networking Sites has broadened the base of contact, interaction and communication among people living round the globe via internet. Social Networking Sites have become a fast penetrating way for people all over the world to connect and interact [1]. Its emergence has been a technological evolutional process and has gained wide spread usage. Even in most villages in Africa where technological innovations are elusive, SNSs have gained usage with the help of mobile phones. These networking sites have succeeded in connecting millions of relatives, friends, business partners, government of nations, just to name a few, simultaneously all over the world. In fact, it has been regarded as the best medium to maintain contact and stay connected.

The first official Social Networking Sites (SNSs) is Classmates. com [2]. It was created for the sole purpose of providing the students a platform that will serve as a means of connecting them together during their degree programme or after the completion of their degree programme. Today SNSs are making great impact nearly in all area of human activities. It has become a tool for distance learning and communication. As web-based application, users of SNSs are able to create personal profiles and share information with friends within the platform. Its usage among students of tertiary institutions has made it an online platform for social interactions, and as well as academic interaction [1].

There exist hundreds of Social Networking Sites. Some of the popular ones like Facebook have some millions of students using them to keep in touch. The number of students of tertiary institutions using SNSs is increasing on daily bases as well as the popularity and acceptability of SNSs on campus. Most students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria are actively connected to the SNSs, and this is specifically true for students of Abia State Polytechnic, Aba. As a matter of fact, social Networking sites have now become proliferated. The involvement of students in social networking at cyberspace is because many of their problems related to studies have been solved by social Networking Sites [3]. From the foregoing, the question one still needs to ask is: are students truly using Social Networking Sites extensively so

as to improve their academic work? Irrespective of what the students may probably be doing on SNSs, a conclusion put forward by [4] from their findings is that Social Networking Sites causes many psychological, physical, interpersonal, and educational discomforts to users when used excessively. Nevertheless, SNSs have indeed impacted on the way and manner students live or socialize on campus.

2. Literature Review

Morallo [1] conducted a research to determine the effects of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) on students' academic performance in Lyceum of the Philippines –Laguna. Descriptive correlation method of research was used to determine the effect of SNSs on academic performance. An online survey questionnaire was designed using Google docs and distributed to 203 students selected randomly from six colleges of Lyceum of the Philippines –Laguna. Correlation analysis was performed between the GPA and the number of SNSs accounts maintained by the respondents, the frequency of SNSs use, when they had SNSs, duration of SNSs use, and the time spent on study. It stated that the variables mentioned increases as the GPA increases, which showed that SNSs had contributed in the higher grades attained. Nevertheless, it concluded by saying that the study found that there was no significant relationship between the use of SNSs and the students' academic performance. Hence, the improvement in the grade was attributed to other factors within the teaching-learning process.

Alhassan and Abukari [5] studied the influence of social media usage on academic performance of students in tertiary institutions using Tamale Polytechnic as a case study. The study was aimed at investigating the type of social network sites (SNSs) and devices used by students and the effects of the use of social network on student academic performance. A total of 600 students were sampled. The observations revealed that majority of students used smartphones, followed by cell phones and laptops. On the type of SNSs, majority used Facebook, followed by Google and Whatsapp. In order to ascertain the effect of SNSs on students' academic performance, it stated that 64.6% of the respondents showed that social media improved academic performance. It averred that no correlation existed between academic work and social media usage from the findings of the study. It then suggested that students should be encouraged to give more time of their social media interactions on issues that relate to their academics.

Helou and Ab. Rahim [6] conducted a research on the influence of social networking sites (SNSs) on students' academic performance in Malaysia. It aimed to obtain students' perceptions on how SNSs influenced their academic performance. A preliminary survey was carried out on a group of students' of Malalysian University so as to obtain information on their use of SNSs and the influence it has on their academic performance. In order to analysed the data obtained, Statistical Package for social science (SPSS) software was used. The outcome indicated that most of the

surveyed students conformed to the fact that SNSs impact positively on their academic performance.

Mehmood and Taswir [7] investigated the effects social networking sites (SNSs) on the academic performance of students in college of applied sciences, Nizwa, Oman. It considered educational nodes such as blogs, wikis, tweets, RSS feeds, discussion boards, podcast in a large network. The usage of these nodes and their impact on learning and social behaviour of students were tabulated. The results indicated that uses and gains of social networks highlighted in the research significantly influence the academic performance of students. It then suggested that the use of social networks for educational and monitory should be applied to human classroom face to face instruction in virtual classroom.

Sharma and Vishvakarma [3] presented a review on the effect of social networking sites on academic performance. It reviewed the impact of social networking sites (SNSs) on academic performance. The research provided the positive as well as the negative effect of social media on academic performance of students. It asserted that the social media are sometimes used for educational purposes and sometimes for non-academic purpose, which adversely impact on the academic performance of the students.

Maqableh et al [8] in their study on the impact of social networks websites usage on students' academic performance investigated how and to what extent SNSs affects the academic performance of students. Research data was collected using drop and collect surveys on large population of students from University of Jordan. Descriptive analysis, T-test and ANOVA were used to test the research hypotheses to determine the impact of SNSs on the academic performance of students. The findings showed that SNS use per week on students' academic performance impact significantly, but no difference was found on the impact of SNS use on academic performance with respect to age, academic achievement, and use per day to most used sites.

Amin et al [9] studied the impact of social media on Student's academic performance. It examined the effect of growing use of social media sites on the academic performance of students of universities and colleges. A sample of 300 students was carried out. Questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics on the questionnaire collected from 97% of the respondents. The finding showed that social media can have positive on students' academic performance. It asserted that social media such as Facebook, twitter, Google, and Skype attracted the attention of students and positively impact on their academic performance.

This research is aimed at studying the effect of social networking sites on the academic performance of students of Abia State Polytechnic, Aba, so as to ascertain the extent to which this may impact on the overall class room learning and research engagement. Abia State Polytechnic is located along factory road, Aba. This institution was chosen because of its strategic location in the commercial hub of Abia State, Nigeria.

3. Methodology

The research methodology employed in this context is a set of well-structured questionnaires which were randomly distributed to a sample of 100 students drawn from National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) of the Abia State Polytechnic, Aba. The questionnaire was distributed to students of different schools that make up the institution. The questionnaire was divided into two parts – labeled X and Y that are used for answering the research questions: what are the causes of students engaging in the use of social networking sites (SNSs)? And to what extent does the use of SNSs affect or impact on students' academic performance? Survey questions were taken from [10] [11] [12] and modified to suit the present research. The questions brought out perceptual responses and a number of distinctive responses that can be useful to the findings. In order to analyze the data collected, Microsoft Excel was used.

4. Research Findings

The structured questionnaire used in this context begins with questions on demography such as age, gender, level of academic and nationality. The responses obtained from the participants showed that 45% are male while 55% are female. 63% of the respondents are National Diploma (ND) students and 37% of the respondents are Higher National Diploma (HND) students. The participants of the survey fall within the age group of 18-22 years old representing 50%, 23-27 years old representing 35%, and 28 years representing 15%.

Figure 1 is a pie chart showing the reasons students of the considered institution use SNSs. Most of the students representing 21% of the respondents use social networking sites (SNSs) to receive and send messages. 20% use SNSs to make friends and 15% use it to chat with friends.
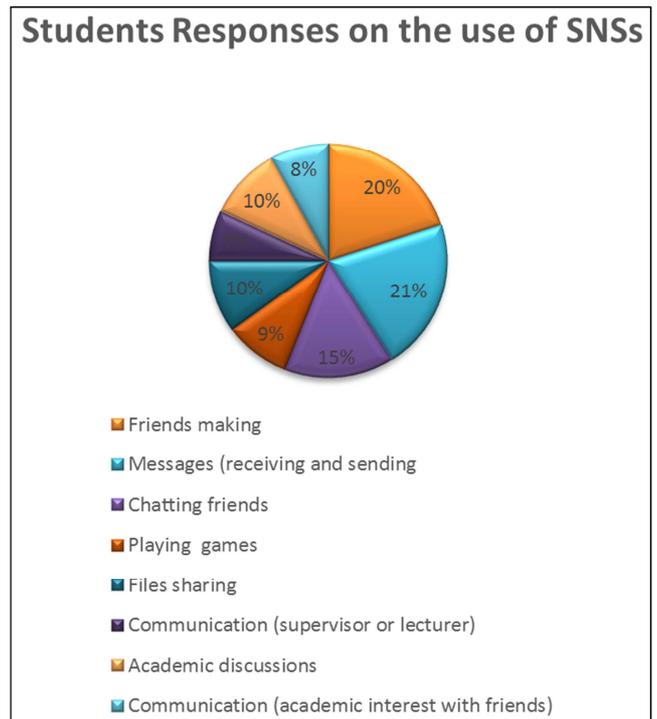
Figure 1. *Students' reasons for using SNSs.*

9% use SNSs to play games and 10% use it to share files. 7% use SNSs to communicate with either their supervisor or lecturer and 10% use it for academic related discussion. 8% use it to communicate academic interest with friends.

Statistical analysis was performed so as to find the average response to questions based on the negative and positive impact of social networking sites to academic performance of student on a 2-point scale. The reason for using a 2-point scale is because the ND and HND programmes are run for two academic years. The analysis is presented in Tables 1 and 2. Figures 2 and 3 show the bar chart presentations of the analysis.

Table 1. *Negative effect of SNSs on academic performance of student.*

| No.	Question	Mean response
1	Networking sites negatively affect my academic performance because of the distraction from my studies	2.50
2	The use of SNSs demands spending money and time and this will affect my studies	2.35
3	Addiction to SNSs seriously impact on my academic performance	2.95
4	It is hard for me to focus on my studies when I can keep myself busy by playing online games	2.83
5	There is a drop in my academic performance since I become engage with SNSs	2.20
6	These SNSs are for individual/social use and as well as for education	2.30
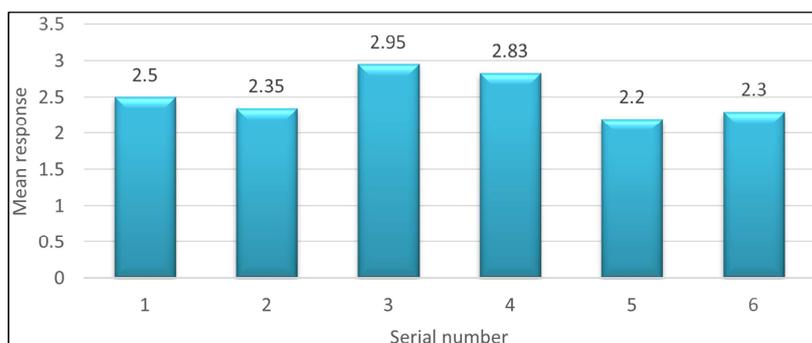
Figure 2. *Bar chart of negative effect of social networking sites on academic performance of student.*

Table 2. Positive effect of SNSs on academic performance of student.

No.	Question	Mean response
7	SNSs usage is useful in higher educational institutions because their effectiveness in communication application	3.50
8	I can arrange group discussion with my classmate using SNSs	3.80
9	Through SNSs appointment can be fixed with my supervisor or lecturer	3.00
10	Using SNSs enhance my studies because with it I can discuss and share my assignment with friends	3.60
11	My interaction with classmates and lecturers is enhanced through SNSs	3.20
12	SNSs helps me to facilitate academic activities and friends coordination	3.20
13	With the help of SNSs I can receive announcements/secular from school authority	3.40
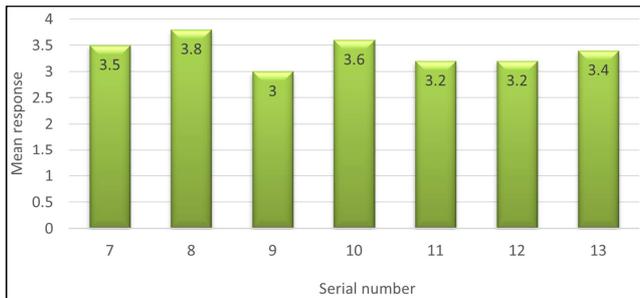
Figure 3. Bar chart of positive effect of social networking sites on academic performance of student.

The negative effect of SNSs on academic performance of student is presented in Table 1 and it is shown as a bar chart in Figure 2. It can be seen that the response on the negative effect indicate lower means which lies between 2.20 to 2.95. Many of the students feel that no significant differences exist between their grade points before and after their usage of SNSs, hence a mean response of 2.20 (lowest mean) was obtained when students were asked if a drop in their academic performance occurs since they become engage with SNSs. The respondents also agree that SNSs is for individual/social use and as well as for education wherein the mean response is 2.30. The mean response which indicated the highest negative effect of SNSs on student's academic performance is on the addiction to SNSs, wherein the value is 2.95. On the other hand, for the responses on the positive effect of SNSs on academic performance of student as shown in Table 2 and represented with a bar chart in Figure 3, higher mean values ranging from 3.00 to 3.80 were obtained for the questions put forward. It can be seen that most of the respondents indicated that SNSs be employed as means of assignments discussion wherein the mean is 3.60, classmate discussion is 3.80 and also to enhance interaction with supervisor or lecturer (mean response of 3.00).

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

5.1. Conclusion

This research has answered the questions highlighted in this context. Majority of students who responded to the questions indicated that they are involved in the use of SNSs especially for social activities rather than for academic work. Nevertheless, a good number of the respondents agree that SNSs have a positive effects on their academic performance, as a result of the fact that it is possible to use SNSs for various academic purposes such as group discussion with classmates, solving assignment, communication with supervisor or lecturer, and receiving announcement/secular from school authority. This can largely impact on the overall academic performance of the students when properly deployed into learning process. On the other hand, the negative effects of SNSs on the academic performance of students seem appreciably low.

5.2. Suggestions

The following suggestions are made based on the findings of this research.

I. Polytechnics and other higher institutions of learning in Nigeria could explore the general acceptance and positive effect of SNSs by formally incorporating their use in teaching and learning process.

II. The Federal and State governments of Nigeria could set up agencies in collaboration with the Federal and state ministries of education to check the use of SNSs by students to ensure robust and healthy usage.

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