

Strategies For Enhancing Academic Usage Of Social Media Among Students As Expressed By Professional Counsellors In Ilorin Metropolis

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Abstract

In this 21st century, negative use of social media among Nigerian students has been a source of concerns to education stakeholders. In view of this, this study investigated strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media as expressed by professional counsellors in Ilorin metropolis. The influence of demographic variables of gender and work experience were also examined on respondents' view. The study was a descriptive survey design. Convenient sampling technique was used to select 210 counsellors; however, 204 questionnaire forms were valid for data analysis. Data were collected using a researcher-designed instrument entitled "Strategies for Enhancing Academic Usage of Social Media Questionnaire". The instrument has a test re-test reliability coefficient of 0.85. The hypotheses were tested using a Factor Analysis and 2-way Analysis of Variance at 0.05 alpha level. The findings revealed that academic usage of social media can be encouraged among Nigerian students by encouraging them to review their online activities in relevance to their level of educational achievement; establishing a well equipped e-library in the school system; and passing instruction to students through technological gadget in order to arouse their interest towards social media for academic purpose. It was recommended therefore that education stakeholders should help students in improving the amount of time spent on social media to accomplish their academic tasks among others.

Key Words: *Strategies, Enhancing Academic Usage, Social Media, Students, Professional Counsellors, Ilorin Metropolis*



Introduction

Technological development has changed the mode of communication across the world. Interaction among individuals has become so flexible that all barriers to communication have been broken and mankind can interact with one another regardless of distance, space or time. Every facet of socioeconomic life had been computerised; hence, people can now achieve as much as they can with the use of technology. One aspect of technological breakthrough which has solved communication problems is social media. The social media is a communication technology that combines computer and telecommunication technologies which are used as channels of information dissemination to heterogeneous audiences without the constraints of time, space or distance (Ikpe & Olise, 2010).

Social media provides possibilities for easy interaction and sharing of information as well as generate new possibilities for people. Spurgeon (2008) described the possibilities as “direct involvement in the selection and distribution of media content, the appropriation and transformation of media content to create new content, and the generation and circulation of original content”. The Internet is considered the most interactive of all communication media because it is engineered to support all modes of interpersonal, mass and computer-mediated communication” (Spurgeon, 2008).

Paxson (2010) identified social media as internet websites such as Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, Twitter and other social networking sites, as well as video games, blogs, mobile telephones, virtual worlds, Global Positioning System (GPS) devices and text messaging devices. With the escalation of mobile phones (Android and other similar labels), the use of social media is common to all age groups but it is more rampant among the population of students particularly those in tertiary institutions. Walter (2015), while reporting the Pew survey of 1,060 adolescents (age between 13-17 years) in USA, asserted that across demographics; race, ethnicity, class, gender, about 92% of teens were online daily and 24% were online almost constantly. In addition, 88% of American teens have (or have access to) a mobile phone of some kind; and the majority of teens (73%) have smartphones. The case is not different in Nigeria. Onomo (2012), from the reports of the analysis carried out by the World Internet Statistics (2012), observed that out of the total population of approximately 180 million Nigerians, 5,860,240 used Facebook.

Students can use social media to connect with one another on group projects, assignments, how to get relevant text books or reading materials, and other various education activities. For example, social media networks can help students to collaborate and exchange ideas about assignments without physical contact. According to Borja (2010), some schools successfully use blogs as teaching tools which has the benefit of reinforcing skills in English, written expression and creativity. Social media can help students develop their interests and find other people who share the same interests; can expose students to new ideas and broaden their knowledge horizons by helping them discover how other people live and think in all parts of the world (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith & Zickuhr, 2010).

While the potential of social media in enhancing educational activities is highlighted by researchers and technological experts, empirical evidences on the use of such sites for academic accomplishment is scanty. For example, Junco (2012) discovered that there was a negative relationship between time spent on Facebook and the GPA of a college student. This implies that student's academic performance suffers when they are distracted by SNS such as YouTube and Google+.

Akpan, Akwaowo and Senam (2013) studied the uses and gratifications of social networking websites among youths in Uyo, Nigeria. They found that youths in Uyo were using at least 46 social networking websites (not for academics) which indicates that they are internet-savvy. Idakwo (2011) posited that the advent of these social media have affected the school work and social interaction of Nigeria students. Students spend more time on Facebook, watts up, Podcast, 2go, Twitter and other social networks through smartphones that are now in abundance in the society. Many students can hardly leave social media sites (in one hour) without checking and updating profiles on their phones, even at the detriment of their educational pursuits.

It is evident based on the above that social media are not positively being used by students despite the fact that it can immensely contribute positively to academic achievement of learners. However, this is affected by low or lack of strategies to promote social media use for academic tasks among the students. Veletsianos and Navarrete (2012) noted that learners needed support in managing the expanded amount of information available to them and devised strategies and “workarounds” to manage their time and participation.

Grove (2017) suggested that academic usage of social media could be enhanced if parents can ask their children to show them how they use social media and what it is; they could try to navigate the social world together, rather than acting as a supervisor so that they could make good decisions about social media use together.

DeGroot, Young and VanSlette (2015) suggested that Introducing blogs into classroom could engage students to express themselves, practice their writing skills, encourages them to find and engage in hobbies and interests. Twitter could be used to share information with students; using a unique hashtag linked to teacher's class or course could encourage dialogue and collate class information in one place. The digestible nature of Twitter can make it an ideal tool for sharing information that students may benefit from outside of time spent in the classroom. Against this backdrop, this study explored the strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media among students as expressed by professional counsellors in Ilorin metropolis.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the numerous benefits embedded in the use of social media for academic endeavours, it appears that majority of Nigeria students are using social media more for other purposes rather than improving or enhancing their academic pursuits. In corroborating this, Adaja and Ayodele (2013) found that about two-thirds of the Nigerian youths that use Facebook platform use it for other reasons than exchange of academic materials. The social networking issue seems to be increasing among youths today; which might affect their academic, social and spiritual lives negatively if not properly controlled.

It is not uncommon seeing students patronizing Cyber-cafes in order to do their assignments despite the fact that they are in custody of sophisticated mobile phones and laptops from which they can accomplish a lot on their academic tasks. They remain uncreative and unconcerned in exploring internet and social media outlets to acquire knowledge for their own academic and personal development, rather they use these outlets for irrelevant activities that will not contribute positively to educational endeavours. Many parents have expressed their dire concern that they have lost the seriousness of their children, as they seem to have been carried away by the fascinating world of social networks. Some youths are such social freaks that they have now carved out for themselves a world of fantasy and illusion for detached from reality.

Bello (2012) of the Sunday Observer stressed that if the dangerous trend of social network “obsession” is left unchecked, it could further affect an already collapsing education system in Nigeria.

Some studies have been conducted on social media usage among Nigerian youths. For instance, Ajewole and Fasola (2012) studied social network addiction among students of tertiary institutions in Oyo State. It was found that majority of the respondents showed a tendency towards addiction to social network sites and so could not do without going through their online profiles daily. Oyero (2013) worked on the use and believability of social networks news among Nigerian youths. The findings showed that social networks have become a major source of news among young people because of the networks’ interactivity, connectivity, immediacy and speed of dissemination.

There is paucity of studies on strategies to enhance students’ usage of social media for academic purpose. It is in the light of this that the researcher investigated the strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media among students as expressed by professional counsellors in Ilorin metropolis.

Research Questions

The research question for this study is as follows:

1. What are the strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media among students as expressed by counsellors in Ilorin metropolis?

Research Hypotheses

The hypothesis tested is as follows:

1. There is no significant difference in the expression of professional counsellors on strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media among students in Ilorin metropolis based on gender and work experience ?

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate for this study because it entails the use of questionnaire in the collection of data on strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media among students as expressed by professional counsellors in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. The population for the study is all professional counsellors with at least first degree

in Guidance and Counselling in Ilorin metropolis. The precise statistics of the professional counsellors in Ilorin metropolis is not available. As a result of this, a convenient sampling technique was employed to select 210 respondents across secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis.

The instrument used for this study was a researchers-developed questionnaire entitled “Strategies for Enhancing Academic Usage of Social Media Questionnaire” (SEAUSMQ). The instrument was divided into two sections (A and B). The first section is section A which elicits information on the personal data of respondents such as gender and work experience . Section B contained twenty (20) items on strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media, patterned on four point Likert-type format, namely; SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

The instrument was validated by five Counsellor Educators in the Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin for scrutiny and the test re-test reliability coefficient obtained was 0.85. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis. factor analysis was used to answer the research question and a 2-way Analysis of Variance was used to test the research hypothesis formulated at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Table 1: Distributions of Respondents’ Demographic Characteristics

N	Variables		Frequency	Percentage %
1	Gender	Male	95	46.6
		Female	109	53.4
		Total	204	100.0
2	Work experience	1-5 years	49	24.0
		6-10years	116	56.9
		11-15 years	29	14.2
		16 years & above	10	4.9
		Total	204	100.0

Table 1 presents the respondents demographic characteristics. The table shows that out of the 204 respondents that participated in the study, 95 (46.60%) were male, 109 (53.4%) were female; hence, more than half (50.0%) of the participants were female. With respect to

respondents' work experience, 49 (24.0%) of the respondents have spent between 1-5 years in counselling, 116 (56.9%) were between 6-10 years counselling experience, 29 (14.2%) have been in practice for 11-15 years, while 10 (4.9%) of the respondents have been practicing for 16 years and above.

Research Question: What are the strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media among students as expressed by professional counsellors in Ilorin metropolis?

Table 2: Summary of Factor Analysis Results on Strategies for Enhancing Academic Usage of Social Media

KMO value	Sig.	χ^2	df	Component (Total variance explained)	Cum. variance %	Items (Rotated component matrix)
.637	0.000	627.482	190	14.928	17.959	14 (.714)
				10.983		19 (.726)
				10.829		2 (.788)
				10.594		11 (.788)
				7.253		15 (.801)
				7.047		18 (.811)

It is indicated in table 2 that the independent variable items were subjected to a factor analysis using Principal Axis Factoring and Orthogonal Varimax Rotation. The table shows that all KMO values for the individual items (>.90) were well above .5 and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO) was .637, meaning that the data was sufficient for Exploratory Factor Analysis. The Bartlett's test of Sphericity - χ^2 (190) = 627.482, $p < .001$ showed that there are patterned relationships among items 1 to 20 on the Strategies for Enhancing Academic Usage of Social Media scale. The Eigen-value cut-off of 1.0, shows there are 6 factors that explain a cumulative variance of 17.959% and the factor loadings after rotation using a significant factor criterion of .5 shows that, accordingly, items 14 (.714), 19 (.726), 2 (.788), 11 (.788), 15 (.801) and 18 (.811) are significant variables in the model. The items revealed encouraging students to review their online activities in relevance to their level of educational achievement; establishing a well equipped e-library in the school system; and passing instruction to students through technological gadget in order to arouse their interest towards social media for academic purpose, creating a group or forum for discussing burning academic related issues, teaching students how to use online information to make proper decisions for real life and asking parents to talk to their

children about risks involved in misusing social media as the strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media among students.

Research Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the expression of professional counsellors on strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media among students in Ilorin metropolis based on gender and work experience?

Table 3: A 2-Way ANOVA Comparing Respondents' Expression Based on Gender and Work experience

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	175.088 ^a	4	43.772	.768	.549
Intercept	38357.478	1	38357.478	672.822	.000
Gender	65.641	1	65.641	1.151	.286
Work Experience	83.136	2	41.568	.729	.485
Gender * Experience	53.544	1	53.544	.939	.335
Error	5929.022	104	57.010		
Total	293297.000	109			
Corrected Total	6104.110	108			

a. R Squared = .029 (Adjusted R Squared = -.009)

Table 3 shows that all effects were statistically not significant at the .05 alpha level. The main effect for gender and work experience of the respondents yielded F ratios of $F(1, 104) = 1.151$ and $F(2, 104) = .729$, $p > .05$, indicating no significant demographic characteristics influence on professional counsellors' expression on strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media among students; hence, the hypothesis was retained. The interaction effect was also not significant, $F(1, 104) = .939$, $p > .005$. This means that overall, irrespective of the demographic variables of respondents (gender and education), their views were similar on the strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media among students in Ilorin metropolis.

Discussion

The findings revealed that the strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media are by encouraging students to review their online activities in relevance to their level of educational achievement. This means that the teachers, counsellors and school authority create an avenue in helping students to crosscheck their academic performance and their level of involvement in social media usage in order to be able understand the gravity of influence

negative social media usage is having on their studies. The finding of this study is in line with the finding of Kristin (2017) which revealed that students can be encouraged towards using social media for their academic activities by helping them to compare their social media involvement to their performance in school. This finding suggests that students should be made responsible for their actions and make proper adjustment towards the use of social media in relevance to their academic or educational pursuits.

Another strategy that can be employed for enhancing academic usage of social media among students, as revealed in this study, is the establishment of a well equipped e-library in the school system. Professional counsellors were of the view that a well equipped e-library can motivate students towards using their social media gadgets to enhance their academic performance. The finding of this study supports the finding of Ntaka (2017) which indicated that a standard e-library can encourage students to make use of different technological tools for educational purpose. In the Nigeria society, it might be very hard to come by an international standard e-library in every level of schoolings. Even many of school libraries are filled up with outdated books and information that are in trend with this modern society. It is thus in the opinion of the school counsellors in Ilorin metropolis that appropriate and international standard e-libraries can reduce students' negative use of social media and enhance their academic usage of social media.

The third strategy as indicated by professional counsellors in Ilorin metropolis for enhancing academic usage of social media is passing instruction to students through technological gadget in order to arouse their interest towards SM for academic purpose. This means that school teachers and lecturers should deliver educational instruction to students using modern technological gadgets. For instance, teacher can use projector and other technological tools to make teaching fascinating and interesting to students. He/she can also share educational information among students and give them group task or assignment to accomplish and submit same through the platform. This will force the students to make use social media outlets for their academic purpose. The finding of this study is consistent with the finding of Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2017) which showed that given pedagogical instruction to students

through technological gadgets and social media platform can force students to make use of social media for the purpose of accomplishing their academic or educational tasks.

The hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference in expression of professional counsellors on strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media among students in Ilorin metropolis based on gender and work experience . This means that differences in gender and work experience have no influence on respondents' view of strategies for enhancing academic usage of social media among students in Ilorin metropolis. The finding of this study is in line with the finding of Badri, Alnuaimi, Al-Rashedi, Yang and Temsah (2017) which indicated that no significant difference exists in teachers' view of relevance of social media to educational activities on the basis of gender. Also, Kristin (2017) showed that counsellors' work experience has influence on their view of social media use among female adolescents. The finding of Kristin is in contrast with the finding of this study. This, perhaps, is due to difference in the geographical location in which the studies were conducted and experiences of the respondents used in both the previous and current studies.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. Counsellors in collaboration with the school authorities and staff should help students in assessing their level of social media usage for academic purpose and for other non-academic activities. This will enable the students to improve on the amount of time they are spending on social media to accomplish their academic or educational tasks.
2. Professional counsellors should on a regular basis be sensitizing the students on the negative effects of using social media wrongly and enlighten them on the benefits embedded in using social media to communicate academic related information. This will motivate students to spend more time on social media for academic purposes rather than for other personal or irrelevant issues.
3. The Nigerian government should equip every school at all levels with a international standard e-library where students can visit, familiarize themselves with those technologies and be able to explore their educational issue through the internet. This will

go a long way in motivating towards using social media platform to share and acquire educational information and knowledge rather than using it for entertainment alone.

4. Teachers and lecturers should be equipped with the knowledge of ICT and how to use it to deliver instruction to students in the classroom environment. This will facilitate teaching in the classroom and make learning fascinating to students; thereby, be encouraged to use social media outlets regularly for acquiring knowledge that can contribute to their academic success.

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