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**Business Education Students' Perception of Educational Usage
of Social Networking Sites in Tertiary Institutions in Anambra
State**

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Abstract

The study sought to establish from business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra state Nigeria, their usage of social networking sites, educational activities they use it for and problems they face using social networking sites. Population of the study was made up of 577 penultimate and final year business education students of four tertiary institutions in Anambra state. Proportionate

sampling technique was used to select 236 students for the study. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. A structured questionnaire was used to gather information for the study. The data collection instrument was subjected to a reliability test which yielded reliability coefficients of 0.70, 0.63 and 0.80 using Cronbach alpha. Mean, frequency count and percentages were used to analyze data in order to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that business education students spend two to three hours on social networking sites daily; they rarely used social networking sites for educational activities and faced the problem of poor network service. The respondents did not differ significantly in their responses regarding academic usage of social networking sites as a result of gender. Consequently, it was recommended, among others, that business education students should be taught to harness the educational potentials of social networking sites as to effectively use these sites for educational purposes.

Introduction

The internet is a global computer network which permits individuals not only to seek information but allows one to conduct business and connect to other people. Individuals define their social life through the internet and become members of social networks to reach and communicate with other individuals of similar cultural levels, field of interests and background. Social networking sites are platforms for virtual social lives created by people over the internet (Tiryakioglu & Erzurum, 2011). Social networking sites as defined by Boyd and Ellison (2007) are a web-based service that allows individuals to:

- a. Construct a public or semi-public profile within a branded system
- b. Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and
- c. View and transverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

Social networking sites are websites that offer a wide variety of resources and services. These sites include: Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp, Badoo, Friendster, 2go, Skype, BBM, WeChat, Viber and so on. Some features of social networking sites according to Ozkan and McKenzie (2008), Boyd and Ellison (2007) and Selweyn (2009) are:

- a. Provision of users with information sharing facilities such as e-mail, chats, instant messaging, videos, blogging, file sharing and photo sharing.

- b. Database for users so that they can easily find friends, form groups, share articles with those with similar interests.
- c. Enable users to reset their own access and privacy, and decide what to share and extent they want to share.
- d. Open source versions which enable users to develop their own applications to be integrated with sites.

Social networking sites are important tools for sharing and obtaining new information as well as making new friends. Social networking sites not only play a significant role in peoples' social life but also in academics. Grant (2008) viewed social networks as not only a means of communication but for academics. Selweyn (2009) highlighted educational benefits of social networking sites to include providing users with a critical thinking environment, support active learning, provide school-student interaction and student-student interaction, increase student interaction with lessons and improve writing skills. Minocha (2009) noted a wide range of applications of social networking sites for teaching and learning to include group work, collaborative collection of resources, recording of group discussions for access after classes, peer and self-assessment, reflective learning as commenting on blogs and engaging in discussion, problem and inquiry-based learning and improving effectiveness of face-to-face tutorials. Benefits derived from the use of social networking sites as an educational tool are enumerated by Balci in Tiryakioglu & Erzurum (2011) as follows:

- a. Independence from time and location
- b. Improvement in quality, success and efficiency of education by use of computer for education
- c. Archive course content and synchronized class (virtual class) applications.
- d. Instant feedback
- e. Repetition of course content as much as one desires
- f. Ease of display of content
- g. Allow design of visual and auditory learning environment
- h. Presentation of courses that require laboratory applications to students via simulation, animation and virtual laboratories.
- i. Possibility of evaluating students' performance
- j. Improve skills of students and teacher to reach, evaluate, use and efficiently cite knowledge.

Young people and students referred to as 'digital natives' are the ardent users of social networking sites. Mohamed and Sumitha (2011) noted that social networking sites enable students to join groups and communicate with other students and faculty members by commenting on topics or by introducing topics for discussion. Mohamed and Sumitha (2011) further stated that students use social networking sites to exchange files and seek comments, advice, opinions and suggestions, and connect to long lost classmates and batch mates.

Business education students are students of business education programme in universities and colleges of education who are taught skills for effective performance in the business world and for teaching. Business education students should not only be knowledgeable in business skills and competencies but should be knowledgeable in navigating through myriads of information via the internet for personal and business use. These students like other tertiary education students make use of social networking sites for diverse purposes which range from viewing friends profiles/pictures to chatting (Ementa & Ile, 2014).

Presenting the dangers of social networking sites to students, Mohamed and Sumitha (2011) noted some concerns on the use of social networking sites with regard to security and privacy, as students and other members of social networking sites display their personal information such as name, address, phone number, e-mail and photo on these sites. Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010) further stated that social networking sites grab the attention of students and divert it towards non-educational and inappropriate actions including useless chatting. In line with this thought, this study sought to ascertain from business education students: the amount of time spent on social networking sites, academic usage of social networking sites and problems faced with social networking sites.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How much time do business education students spend on social networking sites?
2. What educational activities do business education students use social networking sites for?
3. What problem do business education students face with social networking sites?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the rating of male and female business education students on academic usage of social networking sites.

Method

The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey research design. Osuala (2004) recommended that survey research design is most appropriate for studies which center on individuals and their opinions, beliefs, motivation and behaviour. The study was conducted in Anambra state which is located in the south east geo-political zone of Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 577 penultimate year and final year business education students in four tertiary institutions (universities and colleges of education) namely: Nnamdi Azikiwe university, Awka (199 students); Madonna University, Okija (17 students); Federal College of Education (technical), Umuze (295 students) and Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe (66 students). Proportionate sampling was used to select 236 students from the tertiary institutions thus: NAU, Awka (81 students); Madonna University, Okija (7 students); Federal College of Education (Technical), Umuze (121 students) and Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe (27 students). A structured questionnaire with 23 items altogether in three sections (Section A, B1, B2 and B3) was used for data collection. Section A sought demographic data of the respondents while sections B1 and B3 covered two research questions on a 'Yes' or 'No' response option and section B2 covered one research question on a five-point rating of Very Highly Used (5), Highly Used (4), Moderately Used (3), Rarely Used (2) and Not Used (1). Cronbach alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items and scores of 0.90, 0.63 and 0.80 were obtained for the three sections respectively.

Two hundred and thirty six copies of the instrument were administered to the study sample by the researchers with the aid of research assistants who were students in the various institutions. Out of the 236 copies administered, one hundred and ninety five copies were correctly completed and found useful for data analysis. Data collected were analyzed using mean, frequency counts and percentages to answer the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Data analyzed was interpreted thus: for the first research question, an item with the highest frequency was regarded as the highest number of hours spent on social networking sites. For the second research question, an item with mean score of 4.50-5.00 indicate that social networking sites were very highly used by the students for an educational activities, mean score between 4.49- 3.50 was regarded as highly used, 3.49-2.50 was regarded as moderately used, 2.49-1.50 was regarded as rarely used while 1.49-0.50 was regarded as an activity not used by the students. For research question three, any item with the highest frequency was regarded as the major problem faced by students in using social networking sites. In testing the hypothesis, where p-value of paired t-test is greater than 0.05, it means that there was no significant difference in the respondents' opinions and the hypothesis will be accepted. Conversely, where the p-value of paired t-test is less than 0.05, it means

that there was significant difference in the respondents' opinions and the hypothesis will not be accepted.

Results

The results of the study are presented below;

Research Question 1: *How much time do business education students spend on social networking sites?*

Table 1: Frequency count and percentages of business education students' responses on social networking site used most

S/N	Hours spent using social networking sites	Frequency	Percentage
1	1 - 2	87	28.3
2	2 - 3	148	48.1*
3	3 - 4	52	16.9
4	4 - 6	14	4.5
5	6 - 8	7	2.3
6	8 - 10	0	0.0
Total		308	100

The data in Table 1 reveals 6 categories of hours spent on social networking sites. The respondents expressed the view that majority of them spent 2-3 hours daily on social networking sites. This has the highest frequency and percentage of 148 (48.1%). This is followed by 1-2 hours with a frequency and percentage of 87 (28.3%). None of the respondents spent 8-10 hours daily on social networking sites.

Research Question 2: *What educational activities do business education students use social networking sites for?*

Table 2: Mean responses on educational activities business education students use social networking sites for.

S/N	Academic Activities	Mean	Remarks
1	Search for academic information e.g. journals	1.71	Rarely used
2	Submission of assignments, term papers etc	1.73	Rarely used
3	Sending and receiving of course materials through pictures, videos, spreadsheet, presentation, websites etc	1.91	Rarely used
4	Posting of academic information	1.55	Rarely used
5	Discussing new ideas	2.73	Moderately used
6	Posting and promoting creative works	1.56	Rarely used
7	Posting academic questions for clarifications	2.82	Moderately used
8	Group discussion and studies	3.25	Moderately used
9	Announcement about school and classes	3.33	Moderately used
10	Following up current events, news, people or groups	3.01	Moderately used
11	Posting of suggestions about improvement of class activities	1.51	Rarely used
Mean of Means		2.28	Rarely used

Data in Table 2 reveal the academic activities social networking sites are used for. Five out of the 11 academic activities were rated moderately used, while 6 academic activities were rated rarely used by the respondents. However, with a mean of means of 2.28, it is evident that the respondents rarely used social networking sites for academic activities.

Research Question 3: *What problems do business education students face with social networking sites?*

Table 3: Frequency count and percentage of business education students' responses on problems faced when using social networking sites

S/N	Problems of using social networking sites	Frequency	Percentage
1	Poor network service	183	21.2***
2	Lack of time	161	18.7**
3	Fear of misusing personal information	142	16.5*
4	Lack of privacy	126	14.6
5	Lack of security	136	15.8
6	Lack of ICT skills	115	13.3
Total			863

100

The data in Table 3 reveals six problems associated with the use of social networking sites. The respondents rated poor network service as the greatest problem faced when using social networking sites with the highest frequency and percentage of 183 (21.2%). Lack of ICT skills had the lowest rating from the respondents with a frequency and percentage of 115 (13.3%).

Table 4: Paired t-test result of respondents' on academic activities social networking sites are used for based on gender

Variables	N	Mean	SD	SE Mean	Remarks
Males	11	3.49	0.42	0.13	
Females	11	3.36	0.40	0.12	Accept H ₀
Difference	11	0.13	0.45	0.17	

95% CI for mean difference: (-0.18, 0.43)

T-Test of mean difference = 0 (vs not = 0): T-Value = 0.93 **P-Value = 0.38**

Data in Table 4 reveal the p-value of the paired t-test as 0.38 which is greater than 0.05. This means that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of business education students based on gender. The hypothesis was therefore accepted.

Discussion of Results

The study revealed that the respondents showed that business education students spend 2-3 hours on social networking sites and rarely used social networking sites for academic activities. This finding is in line with the views of Kahn (2011) who reported that students used social networking sites for chatting, time killing by random searching and entertainment. This finding is also in line with the findings of Ementa and Ile (2014) who reported that business education students use social networking sites for viewing friends' profile/pictures and for chatting. Following the widely discussed benefits and potentials of social networking sites in education, one would have expected the students in the study to harness the educational potentials of social networking sites considering the number of hours they spend using these sites daily. The implication of this finding is that business education students have not yet exploited the educational use of social networking sites.

The study also revealed that the greatest problem business education students face using social networking sites is poor network service. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Sanusi, Adelabu and Okunade (2014) who reported that one of the challenges of using social networking sites was high cost of internet connection and poor network by service providers in Nigeria. The implication of this finding is that poor network service contributes to students' non-use of social networking sites for academic activities.

With regards to the hypothesis, the study revealed that the paired t-test analysis of respondents on academic activities social networking sites are used for based on gender revealed a no significant difference. This finding is in disparity with the findings of Khan (2011) who reported that male students used social networking sites for knowledge and communication more than female students. The implication of this finding is that students, irrespective of their gender rarely use social networking sites for academic activities.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that business education students spend two to three hours of the day using social networking sites for

different purposes other than academic purposes. The greatest challenge faced by the students in the usage of social networking sites was poor network service. Unfortunately, business education students rarely used social networking sites because the programme implementers in the institutions do not seem to exploit the educational gains of these sites and teach the students using these sites. The implementers on the other hand may likely experience the problem the students encounter in the use of social networking sites which is poor network service in using these sites to teach.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. Tertiary institution business education students should show immense interest in the use of social networking sites for academic purposes so as to effectively harness and utilize the educational advantages which these sites present to their users.
2. Business education lecturers should be trained through seminars, workshops and symposia on how to acquire the skills and competencies needed to effectively use social networking sites in the teaching and learning processes.
3. Management of tertiary institutions should organize seminars to educate lecturers and students on how they can efficiently manage their time and how to make productive use of social networking sites for academic goals.
4. The National Communication Commission (NCC) in Nigeria should compel and sanction telecommunication service providers to provide adequate and low cost network service for users of internet facilities especially within educational environments.
5. Management of tertiary institutions should provide students subsidized internet enabled palm tops or laptop computers so as to enable all students have access to computer devices in order to exploit the academic benefits of social networking sites.

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