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Influence of Social Media Engagements on the Academic Achievement of Students in Tertiary Institutions

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Abstract
This study investigates the influence of social media engagements on academic achievement among tertiary institution students. The research methodology involved an online survey using Google Forms, distributed randomly through social media and email. The instrument consisted of two sections: basic information of the respondents and questions related to the use of social media in school and their influence on performance. The data collected was analyzed using narrative analysis and a deductive approach to identify themes. The findings suggest that social media has both positive and negative impacts on academic achievements, and that it is important to understand and manage social media use for optimal academic performance. The study was limited to tertiary institution students, and the validity and reliability of the instrument were ensured through pretesting and feedback from undergraduate and graduate students.

1. Introduction
1.1 Backgorund of the study
Today the influence of the social media has been explored globally for business, by governments, research institutions, educational institutions, and other organizations to connect with one another. This has helped pull down the barriers of geography and distance, thereby providing very rich medium for communication, information dissemination, exchange and collaboration among individuals and computers (Emeka and Nyeche, 2016) [8].

As recent technologies are effective for promoting to the seven principles suggested by Chickering and Gamson (1987). These principles include student–faculty contact, prompt feedback, active learning, diversity, high expectation, time on task, and student cooperation. (Crews, Wilkinson, & Neill, 2015) [5], attention is often given to learning with technology (O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). This is because, active learning and interaction between students require some amount of technology engagement (Blasco-Acras, Buil, Hernandez-Ortega, & Sese, 2013); and accordingly, several studies have investigated the relationship between technology and student engagement (Domingo & Gargante´, 2016) [6]. Others have also tried to explain the effective role played by social media in facilitating student engagement (Tess, 2013). Yet, current research on how social networking sites (SNSs) influence engagement is not adequate (Eid & Al-Jabri, 2016) [7].

Previous studies suggest that social media increases student collaboration, leading to positive learning outcomes (Junco *et al.*, 2013 [11]; Neier and Zayer, 2015). However, many institutions do not have a clear strategy for engaging with students on social

media outside classrooms and little is known about what makes such initiatives meaningful (Malesky and Peters, 2012) [17]. Research into international students' experiences with their university's social media is scarce, despite the steady growth in international students' numbers worldwide (UNESCO, 2014) and their unique needs for information, social connectedness, and cultural experiences (Chavan *et al*., 2014 [4]; Hendrickson *et al*., 2011) that universities may be able to address through social media initiatives.

This is a particularly important issue in Australia, as international education is the country's fourth largest export and enhancing international students' experiences is a national issue (IEAC, 2013). Most international students in Australia are enrolled in the higher education sector, with 80 per cent from Asian countries (AEI, 2013) and social media seem to play a pivotal role in the formation of their new relationships (Lin *et al*., 2012); creating opportunity for universities to engage with such students through this medium and help them adjust to the local environment.

However, a deeper perception into the understanding, interest or encouragement of students engaged in higher education using social media is an important step towards developing an inclusive and productive educational landscape that is ever changing.

The influence of social media engagement on learning outcomes and student achievement is a complex and multifaceted issue. This case study will contribute to the understanding of how tertiary institution students utilize social media for learning, and the impact it has on their academic performance. It will also provide valuable insights for educators and institutions to optimize the use of social media as a tool for enhancing the learning experience and supporting student success.

1.2 Research Problematization
Social media sites have become more popular and familiar over the years but still students from many parts of the world face tons of challenges in their academic performance. In the present contemporary age, due to the huge amount of time spent on social media by students, parents and guardians are becoming increasingly worried about their children academic life more than before. Nowadays it has become a common sight for anyone to see a youth or young ones chatting insensitive, highly organized lecture venues and religious places like church, mosque and temples (Asemah, Okpanachi, & Edegoh, 2013) [2]. Some are so excited that whilst they're walking along the high way, they keep chatting.

By considering the different perspectives and findings of research studies, while some studies suggest that social media positively impacts students' academic performance, efficiency, and productivity Mavuso, Manquma & Aruleba, (2022), others indicate that social media severely impacts academic performance, leading to addiction and distraction from studies (Kouser, 2020) [16]. Moreover, some studies suggest that social media has a positive effect on the academic achievement of post-graduate students because of the educational sites and study materials available, Sharma & Behl (2022), while others indicate that social media use can lead to reduced productivity, reduced academic achievement, and addiction to constant media use (Chen & Xiao 2022).

Therefore, it is important to consider the different factors that influence the impact of social media on academic

achievement, such as personality traits, education level, and gender Oguguo *et al* (2020), and to develop strategies to harness the potential benefits of social media while mitigating its negative effects.

1.3 Research Objective
The objective of the research is to determine the extent to which the use of social media has influenced students' academic achievements in tertiary institutions.

1.4 Research Question
The research is guided with the research question:
What is the influence of social media on the academic achievement of the students?

1.5 Research hypothesis
H_0: There is no significant impact of social media use on students' academic performance.
H_1: Increased frequency of social media use are associated with lower academic achievement.

2. Literatures Review
2.1 Operationalizing Social Media and Student Academic Achievement
2.1.1 Social Media
Social media can be defined as digital platforms and technologies that enable users to create and share content, as well as network and communicate with others. This includes but is not limited to social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), messaging apps, online forums, and multimedia sharing platforms. It encompasses both academic and non-academic use, such as accessing educational resources, communicating with peers and instructors, and engaging in non-academic activities like entertainment and socializing (Shazia, 2020 [23]; Sourabh and Ramesh, 2022; Manjur, Raisa and Abdalla, 2021)

2.1.2 Student Academic Achievement
Student academic achievement can be defined as the overall academic performance of students, including their grades, test scores, class rankings, and other indicators of learning and educational success. This encompasses both quantitative and qualitative measures of academic accomplishment, such as GPA, examination results, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to their course of study (Shazia, 2020; Owusu-Acheaw and Agatha, 2015) [23, 22].

For students, social media is an exciting and captivating tool that has opened doors to a wealth of information, including huge networking opportunities and, above all, convenient access. Students appear to spend a lot of their time on social media. Thus, incorporating social media into teaching and learning practice and diverting the attention from casual socializing and gaming to social learning could prove to be valuable.

2.2 Review of Related Literatures
Through a review, Tess (2013) highlighted that the majority of studies on social media usage in higher education classes had reported more positive than negative consequences for students. Students have a positive perception of using social media to enhance teaching and learning activities (Balakrishnan *et al*. 2017), and the use of social media technologies has also shown to increase academic performance of distance education students (Arif and

Kanwal 2016). Social media use, as well as teachers messaging students, improved relationships and connections between students and staff, leading to improved class attendance and higher rates of completion (Callan and Johnston 2017). Social media can also facilitate distance learning by providing easier access to subject content in a variety of formats. As students are expected to conduct some form of research during their studies, social media gives them access to a wide range of information, often in a quicker way than traditional research methods. Social media platforms also enable students to consult others who have done similar projects or interact with experts across the world.

Existing research that relates to engagement are mostly in the domain of student learning outcomes. This has received more prominence in recent times (Bryson, 2014). Studies have shown that the amount of interaction and level of quality directly influence student learning and development (Croxton, 2014; Shadiev *et al.*, 2014). As an attempt to promote and improve the effectiveness of student engagement, several studies have emphasized the use of social media. This is because, existing research has demonstrated that social media and networks play an important role in student engagement (George, 2017).

Currently, students are exposed to various technologies than ever before. Often, they use interactive and computing devices to engage in more social activities such as social networking, text messaging, blogging, online learning, content sharing, and many others (Lim & Richardson, 2016). Approximately, 49 million millennials own a smart phone and 75% of them have a social networking profile (Zickuhr, Rainie, Purcell, Madden, & Brenner, 2012). Studies have also shown that majority of students are familiar with and are also actively engaged in the use of social networking platforms (Paliktzoglou & Suhonen, 2014; Scott, Sorokti, & Merrell, 2016).

The improved usage of websites is a worldwide phenomenon for over a decade now. What began out as being a hobby for several computer literate people has converted to a social norm and existence-style for individuals from around the world (Nicole, 2007) [19]. College students are exploring the social media sites for contacting their peers, sharing information, reinvent their personas and showcasing their lives (Nicole, 2007) [19].

According to Khan (2009) [15], Facebook users often experience poor performance academically. Similarly, Englander, Terregrossa and Wang (2010) [9] posits that social media is negatively associated with academic performance of students. The author also suggests that the negative influence on academic performance surpasses its advantages. Internet addiction had led to its wide adoption and usage globally (Khan, 2009) [15].

According to Karpinski (2009) [14], social media usage such as Facebook users devoted lesser time to their studies compared to non-users. This claim was based on findings which showed that those with high Facebook usage had lower GPAs. Karpinski (2009) [14] also mentioned that among various unique distractions of every single generation, Facebook remains a major distraction of current generation.

Oguguo, *et al.* (2019) [21] conducted a study to determine the influence of social media on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students. The study revealed that students use social media for various purposes, including

staying up to date with the latest trends and news, reaching out to classmates for group assignments, researching future academic careers, and discussing trending topics. However, students rarely use social media to reach out to their teachers. The study also found that the duration and quality of time spent on social media have an impact on academic performance.

The study titled "Influence of social media on students' academic achievement in accounting education in Nigeria" used an ex-post facto research design to establish cause-effect relationships between variables of interest that cannot be manipulated. The study participants consisted of 150 accounting students (70 males and 80 females) selected through a multi-stage sampling procedure. The instruments used for data collection were Social Media Questionnaire (SMQ) and Students Accounting Achievement Proforma (SAAP). The SMQ had three clusters: Cluster A-what students use social media for consisted nine items; cluster B-duration of time spent on social media contained nine items and cluster C-frequently used social media contained eleven items. The SAAP was used to collect demographic data of the respondents. The study concluded that social media usage has a significant negative impact on the academic achievement of accounting students in Nigeria (Oguguo, *et al*, 2020).

Karpinski and Duberstein (2009) [14] conducted a study to describe Facebook use and academic performance among undergraduate and graduate students. The study found that there is a relationship between time spent on social media and academic performance. Spending more time on social media contributes to low academic performance. Choney (2010) also found that more time spent on Facebook affects excellent academic performance.

Several studies have confirmed the significant impact that social media has on students' learning engagement and academic success in higher education institutions, including how it can improve relationships, motivate students to learn, provide individualized course materials, and foster teamwork (Oghuma & Adebayo, 2019 [20]; Junco *et al.*, 2010).

Kouser (2020) [16] conducted a study to examine the influence of social media on academic achievement of post-graduate students. The study found that social media has a positive effect on the academic achievement of post-graduate students because the educational sites and study materials available on social media platforms help students in their academic pursuits. However, the study also found that students' addiction to social media can negatively affect their academic performance.

Another study by the University of New Hampshire (2011) found that there is no relationship between social media use and students' academic performance. However, Kouser (2020) [16] found that social media has a positive effect on the academic achievement of post-graduate students. The study also found that there is no significant difference in social media usage between science and humanity students.

3. Research Methodology
3.1 Research Design
In this study, a case study research design was used to find the cause-effects relationship between variables i.e., social media and academic achievement. Social media served as the independent variable while academic achievement served as the dependent variable. In this design, the

independent variable cannot be manipulated. A non-probability sampling technique was adopted to determine the sample for this study. A convenience sampling technique was used specifically to determine sample for the study. This technique was used because it is cheap, convenient considering the short time required to complete the study.

3.2 Data Collection (Instrument)

The research instrument used for the collection of data were based on a set of structured survey questions in Google forms and were open-ended (i.e. short answer text). This allowed the respondents to express themselves properly according to how they feel about each question. The instrument consists of two sections: The basic information of the respondents (section A) and questions relating to the use of social media in school and their influence on performance (section B) (Appendix).

The instrument contained a total of five (5) open ended survey questions which was used to collect respondents' opinions on how social media influences their academic achievement. A Google form was used to design the survey question, and was distributed randomly to tertiary students through social media such as WhatsApp, Telegram and even via E-mail.

3.3 Respondents

The respondents were limited to only tertiary institution students. This means only students from the Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges, Postgraduate students were eligible to respond to the questions as already stated in the case study of this research.

3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The questions contained in the survey-format instrument were pretested with some undergraduate and graduate students in order to check and improve the quality of the instrument and to also ensure that the questions were strongly in line with the objectives of the study. After the pretest, the instrument was properly adjusted and improved based on the feedbacks of these students.

4. Results

4.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation

After collecting data from the participants, a narrative analysis was used to analyze the data. This type of analysis allows for flexibility in interpreting the data. Also, a deductive approach was used in order to determine the kind of themes needed for the analysis.

Social media has changed the ways in which students interact with each another, creating platforms for academic collaboration. Its usage among students in tertiary institutions has been pervasive and widespread. This study took a look on how this usage influence the academic achievement of just students of tertiary institutions. Some respondents reported that due to the ability of social media to easily bring people of varied cultural backgrounds together to easily interact, it has help them collaborate in productive ways with course mates, hence enabling them to complete assignments in good time and in turn scoring high in those assignments. Some respondents reported several benefits of social media to academic achievement such as making learning easier and interesting which in turn will translate to higher grades. It also makes access to learning materials easy and cheap. It was also reported by several

respondents that social media improves creativity by allowing students have a broader view and perspectives of various topics and subjects. Though lots of advantageous influences of social media were identified by respondents, some respondents reported that social media distracts them from academic work which may not impact positively on their achievement level. These categories of respondents reported using social media basically for entertainment, chatting, socializing and watching sports.

4.2 Limitations of the study

Data that was collected for the purpose of this research was mainly based on survey questions (open-ended) and the research only focused on tertiary institution students. Thus, the result may not be able to represent the entire students in tertiary institutions. The survey was also conducted with minimum time span, thus providing limited information. Also, the research paper was again based on primary data, so some of the information provided by the respondents might not be entirely true. It is possible that some of the respondents faked their responses. These limitations may have slightly affected the findings of the study.

5. Summary, Conclusion & Recommendations

5.1 Summary

The study was conducted to examine the influence of social media on academic achievement, a case study of tertiary institution students. The objective of this study was to examine the influence of social media on tertiary students' academic performance. The study was a case study research design.

The survey for the study was done using Google-form questions (i.e. open-ended) with a sample size of 42. The study was based on the survey collected from Google forms among tertiary institution students randomly. The data was analyzed using the narrative analysis from the responses. In addition, the study revealed a good relationship between social media and academic achievement i.e a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

5.2 Conclusion

From the finding of the result of the study, it showed that there is a positive and negative influence of social media on the academic achievements of tertiary institution students. Social media has gone a long way in helping students to do collaborative learning with their colleagues, to reach out to their teachers irrespective of the distance, to be creative, research about their assignments and gain an in-depth knowledge of their course contents.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are highly recommended:
1. Students should be introduced to some valuable social media websites that can positively impact their learning e.g. researchgate.net.
2. Students should be lectured on the beneficial uses of social media in the academic settings.
3. Proper policies should be implemented to guide students that utilize social media for unethical uses.

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