



Influence Of Twitter Usage On Academic Performance Of Accounting Education Undergraduates In Public Universities In Abia State

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State. Two purposes of the study and corresponding research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive research survey design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of two hundred and fifteen (215) 200-400 levels Accounting Education students in public universities offering Accounting Education in Abia State in 2021-2022 academic session which were all accommodated as the sample size for the study. The instrument for data collection is a self structured questionnaire titled: "Twitter Usage and Academic Performance of Accounting Education Undergraduates in Public Universities Questionnaire" (TUAPAEUPUQ), was design to elicit information from the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the questions and t-test statistic was used to test hypotheses. The results showed that Twitter, usage influences the academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State. Based on the findings, the study recommended, among others, that University management should make bye-laws prohibiting the use of Twitter by the students in the school.

Keywords: Social media, Twitter, Performance, Study time

INTRODUCTION

Since the introduction of social media around a decade ago, social media platforms and applications have become steadily popular among public and used widely for entertainment, socialization, and information seeking and sharing purposes. Twitter, which can be categorized as a specific form of social media activity – microblogging, was established in 2006 and is one of the prominent social media platforms (others include Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube) across the globe (Alhabash & Ma, 2017). Twitter's microblogging feature allows users to publish their ideas and opinions in "real-time messaging" format by writing tweets limited to certain number of characters (initially 140 but now up to 280). Furthermore, by features such as hashtags, mentions, and replies, users can network and dialog with other Twitter users (Steckenbiller, 2016). Various aspects of Twitter practices has been researched in a number of domains including tourism, sports, governance, health information, elections and activism. Besides using Twitter for entertainment and leisure, the platform is predominantly used for social interaction, information sharing, information seeking, self-documentation, and self-expression (Liu, Cheung, & Lee, 2010).

The world has been changed rapidly by the evolution of technology. This has resulted into the use of technology as the best medium to explore the wide area of knowledge. The evolution of internet technology has led to its use as the best medium for communication. Whereby, two-third of the world's internet population visits social networking or blogging sites, thus serving as a communication and connection tool. Social networking sites (SNSs) are online Communities of Internet users who want to communicate with other users about areas of mutual interest, whether from a personal, business or academic perspective (William, Boyd, Densten, Chin, Diamond & Morgenthaler 2019). The millions of social networking sites have transformed the thought of global village into a reality whereby billions of people communicate through social networking sites. Numerous benefits have been obtained from distant communication through the use of social networking sites.

Academic excellence or achievement plays an important role in an individual's placement, be it in the academic institutions or job placement. Due to this, many people are concerned with the ways they can enhance their academic achievement. The emphasis on academic excellence which is also prevalent worldwide has encouraged many studies about the conditions promoting it. The role of academic achievement as one of the predictors of one's life success and also in the aspect of academic placement in schools to higher institutions as well as the level of employability in one's career is inevitable (Kyoshiba, 2019).

Academic performance, which is measured by the examination results, is one of the major goals of a school. According to Tuckman's model, reviewed by Gasaymeh (2017), academic performance is the illustration of our knowledge, understanding, skills and he describes grade point average (GPA) as a clear indicator of students' performance. Hoyle (2016) argued that schools are established with the aim of imparting knowledge and skills to those who go through them and behind all this is the idea of enhancing good academic performance.

Academic performance or achievement is the outcome of education, the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Academic performance is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are important, procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts (Annie, Howard & Mildred, 2018).

The use of social media (like facebook, Youtube, Twitter and WhatsApp) by students in universities today is resulting to mass failure of students in academic achievement (David, 2014). This is because students, these days, spend more time chatting with their friends rather than engaging in research or reading their books. A growing number of Nigerian scholars agree that addiction to social media sites have become a distractive technology to students' academic work in higher education. Among the scholar is Oluwatoyin (2016) who surveyed 1,860 Facebook users from the Lagos State University and found that 90percent of the students could not get up to Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) above 3.50 based on 5 point scale, because they had spent a large part of their time on social media than on their homework and study time (which could contribute to higher grade).

A direct relationship exists between Social media usage and the academic performance of accounting education students in universities. However, the darker side within technological evolution has resulted in dilemmas such as the setback of real values of life especially among students who form the majority of users interacting through the use of social networking sites (Tinto, 2017).

Even though social media platforms were not designed with the explicit purpose of supporting educational and other learning-related activities, their affordance for networking and content sharing have made them a natural fit for those purposes (Tess, 2013). Institutions of higher education, elementary and high schools, scholarly communities, as well as federal and state education agencies have actively embraced various social media platforms (Jordan, 2017). More recently, Twitter is being encompassed as an augmented scholarly communication tool for formal and informal learning. Students, scholars, and professionals from numerous academic domains use the network to connect and engage with peers and public to share discipline specific and other relevant information with an aim of pursuing their academic interests and goals (Holmberg & Thelwall, 2014). A number of recent studies have also demonstrated the

value, impact, and acceptance of Twitter in the context of education. For instance, Twitter has been reported to increase learning capabilities and communication (Bista, 2015).

Twitter is an American microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as "tweets". Registered users can post, like and retweet tweets, but unregistered users can only read them. Users access Twitter through its website interface or its mobile-device application software ("app"), though the service could also be accessed via SMS before April 2020. Twitter, Inc. is based in San Francisco, California, and has more than 25 offices around the world. Tweets were originally restricted to 140 characters, but was doubled to 280 for non-CJK languages in November 2017. Audio and video tweets remain limited to 140 seconds for most accounts (Ijeoma & Tusiima, 2017).

Similarly, Twitter is deemed helpful in enhancing engagement and collaboration among peers, teachers, and students (Desselle, 2017). On the other hand, few studies have also highlighted the negative aspects of incorporating Twitter in the educational context. These studies have emphasized the inappropriate usage, overexposure, reputation, information overload, addiction, as well as other issues associated with the content and personal privacy (Cho & Rangel, 2017). This is why this study was conducted to empirically fill the identified gap to examine the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times social media have been a major stay in the minds of students and the world at large thereby causing problems to both students, teachers and even educational administrators at large. It is, therefore, of great importance to explore some of the trending issues facing students' academic performance as a result of social media. Students at all levels of learning now have divided attention to studies, as a result of available opportunities to be harnessed from social media. Whether these opportunities promote studies is a question that needs to be answered. Thus, the problem of this study is to investigate the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to examine the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State. Specifically, the study examined:

1. The extent at which students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State.
2. The influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

1. To what extent does students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State?
2. What are the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at the alpha level of 0.05.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State.

METHODOLOGY

The paper adopted descriptive survey design. The study area comprised of two public universities in Abia State. The institutions were selected because all of them offer accounting education programme which give them equal chance to participate in the study. The population of the study is two hundred and fifteen (215) 200-400 levels Accounting Education students which were all accommodated as the sample size. This means there is no sample size and sapling technique for the study. The instrument for data collection

was Questionnaire Survey entitled “Twitter Usage and Academic Performance of Accounting Education Undergraduates in Public Universities Questionnaire” (TUAPAEUPUQ). The instrument was divided into two part A and B. Part A elicited information on the personal data and characteristics of the polytechnics. Part B elicited information on the (a) elicit information on the extent at which students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State, (b) elicit information on the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State. The instrument was validated by two experts in Business Education Department of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined by administering the instrument to thirty (30) students from private university in Enugu State, Nigeria. The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Approach with the aids of SPSS which yielded the index of 0.79. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation with the aid of Special Package for Social Science (SPSS).

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent does students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State?*

The result of data analysis is as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Respondents’ mean ratings on the extent students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Students use Twitter to share class information	3.20	0.72	High extent
2	Students use Twitter to share pictures	1.47	0.83	Low extent
3	Students use Twitter to chart with friends	2.51	0.82	High extent
4	Students use Twitter to purchase for items online	1.35	0.96	Low extent
5	Students use Twitter to source for items online	3.06	0.74	High extent
	Grand mean	2.32		Low extent

The data in Table 1 relate to the extent students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State. The results show that items 1, 3 and 5 agreed that students use Twitter to share class information, students use Twitter to chart with friends and that students use Twitter to source for items online; while items 2 and 4 disagreed that students use Twitter to share pictures and students use Twitter to purchase for items online. The grand mean of 2.32 shows that extent students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State at low extent. Standard deviation ranging from 0.72-1.02, show disparity in the opinion of undergraduates on the extent students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State.

Research Question 2

What are the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State?

The result of data analysis is as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings on the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
6	Twitter usage affects reading time	2.64	1.02	Agreed
7	Twitter usage promotes poor concentration during lessons	2.68	0.88	Agreed
8	Twitter usage facilitates poor participation during lessons	2.90	0.90	Agreed
9	Twitter usage improves attention in class exercise	2.67	0.95	Agreed
10	Twitter usage promotes creative ability among the students	2.37	1.12	Disagreed
	Grand mean	2.65		Agreed

The data in Table 2 relate to the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State. The results show that items 6, 7, 8 and 9 agreed that Twitter usage affects reading time, Twitter usage promotes poor concentration during lessons, Twitter usage facilitates poor participation during lessons and that Twitter usage improves attention in class exercise. While item 10 disagreed that Twitter usage promotes creative ability among the students. The grand mean of 2.34 agreed that the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State. Standard deviation ranging from 0.72-1.02, show disparity in the opinion of undergraduate on the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State.

Hypotheses 1

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State.

To test the first hypotheses, the means for the two groups were computed to obtain the t-values at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the computation is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: t-test result of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State.

Gender	N	X	S	t-cal	∞	Df	t-crit	Remark
Male	30	3.38	0.79	0.82	0.05	68	1.96	Not rejected
Female	40	3.2	0.85					

As shown in Table 3, male and female students on the extent students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State at low extent. The t-calculated value of 0.82 is less than t-tabulated value of 1.96 at 68 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance and this suggests that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State. This therefore means that the null hypotheses was not rejected.

Hypotheses 2

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State.

To test the first hypotheses, the means for the two groups were computed to obtain the t-values at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the computation is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: t-test result of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State.

Area of Location	N	X	S	t-cal	∞	Df	t-crit	Remark
Male	30	2.88	1.16	2.4	0.05	68	1.96	Rejected
Female	40	3.44	0.81					

As shown in Table 4 indicates that the calculated t-value is (2.4) and the critical value is (1.96) at 68 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance and this suggests that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female students on the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State. This therefore means that the null hypotheses was rejected.

Summary of Findings

1. That students use Twitter to share class information, students use Twitter to chat with friends and that students use Twitter to source for items online.
2. That Twitter usage affects reading time, Twitter usage promotes poor concentration during lessons, Twitter usage facilitates poor participation during lessons and that Twitter usage improves attention in class exercise.
3. That there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent students use Twitter in public universities in Abia State.
4. That there is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female students on the influence of Twitter usage on academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that Twitter usage influences the academic performance of accounting education undergraduates in public universities in Abia State. Though many arguments can be made about the possible risks of adolescent social networking, it is important to point out the benefits of these websites as well. Many schools have started to use these sites to promote education, keep students up to date with assignments, and offer help to those in need. In general, the Internet and social networking sites can be a positive influence on adolescents. Social networking sites provide an outlet for teens to express themselves in their own unique ways. In addition, they serve both as a meeting place for teens to interact with other like-minded people and as showplaces for a teen’s artistic and musical abilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. University management should organise sensitization workshops to educate the students on the positive use of Twitter in learning outside the school especially during holiday.
2. Students should decrease their introduction to the use of twitter and give careful consideration to their studies.
3. Institutions should focus on making pleasant things useful - promoting twitter as a tool not only for communication and entertainment but also for learning.
4. The universities should provide students with websites created for academic work to encourage students to visit these sites for educational information/material

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