Impacts of social media Use on the Academic Performance of Students of Private Tertiary institutions in Ghana: The Valley View University Perspective

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Abstract
This paper examined the impacts of social media use on the academic performance of students of private tertiary institutions in Ghana using the Valley View University, Oyibi Campus, Accra, as a case study. A cross-sectional survey design method was adopted for the study. The population of the students was two thousand, one hundred and seventy – two (2,172). Instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. A total of 388 copies of a questionnaire were administered to the students based on probability sampling technique, 362 copies of the questionnaire were filled correctly and thus, were used for the analysis. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). The findings revealed that entertainment and relaxation, posting pictures, and chatting with friends were students' motivators. It was found that the frequent use of social media had negatively affected the academic performance of some students. The study recommended to University management to motivate students to use the various social media platforms for academic activities rather than non-academic activities. The study also recommended that students should be advised to reduce the number of hours spent on the social media platforms.

Keywords: academic performance, Ghana, private, social media, technologies, tertiary students

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1.0 Introduction
The world is witnessing a massive explosion of information due to the presence of the internet and various communication technologies. The rapid growth of the internet has given birth to numerous social media sites and platforms that allow billions of users across the globe to access, communicate, share ideas, and post pictures irrespective of their geographical locations (Ugwulebo and Okoro, 2016; Daluba and Maxwell, 2013). The World Wide Web (WWW) appears to catch the attention of both the old and the young under its Web in various aspects of human activities through the use of various social media sites. This affirms an earlier revelation made by Kemp (2017) that over two-thirds (2/3), representing 66.7% of internet users as well as one-third (1/3), 33.3% of the world’s population are social media sites users.

The emergence of the various social media networks has revolutionized the activities of teaching, learning, research, mode of communication, and the process of information exchange/dissemination. All these activities carried out on the various social media platforms today give credence to the fast development in technology and the internet. In the views of Jiao et al. (2015), social media are information technology platforms on which user communities search for information, share experiences with friends, and establish relationships with other users for some reasons. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) also defined social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Doyle (2012), noted that social media is an online technology tool that permits individuals or groups of individuals to communicate through the internet to exchange information and resources. Individuals or institutions can create social media accounts to share information such as text, audio, video, picture, podcast, and other forms of multimedia communication. Social media sites attract the attention of tertiary students and then divert them to non-academic activities and unnecessary chatting (Kuppuswamy and Narayan, 2010).

Students spent 6 to 8 hours a day on social networking sites; the minimum time students spent is considered to be two hours daily (Wang et al., 2011). Studies on social media use show different uses of these platforms as an avenue for learning, exchange of information, a place for relaxation during leisure time as well as meeting and chatting with friends. This indicates that there is considerably more to be found about the benefits and effects associated with the use of the various social media platforms. The current study is to examine the impacts of social media Use on the Academic Performance of Students of Private Tertiary institutions in Ghana through the following objectives:

1.1 Objectives of the study
1. To determine what motivates students to visit these platforms.
2. To find out the impact of social media usage on students’ academic performance.
3. To investigate the time spent on the social media platforms by students.

1.2 Factors that motivate the use of Social Media
With the emergence of the internet, students are currently exposed to a lot of information that influences their behaviour as well as learning attitude. Various social media platforms are created on daily basis; these influence students to visit these platforms and post their personal information instead of adopting the platforms for
academic activities. Motivation entices people to put in extra efforts to perform what they are expected to do. In other words, motivation is what makes people work sometimes with or without instruction and even no supervision. Both intrinsic and extrinsic factors can cause people to be attracted to do a certain kind of work. This means that motivation affects human behaviour in various ways.

Massi (2010) revealed the factors that encourage students to use social networks as meeting with friends and connecting with others to achieve self-esteem and self-actualisation. Ezumah (2013) identified some factors that motivate students to use specific social networking sites, as the degree of interaction, the ease of use of the site, the convenience of uploading and downloading information, and the ability to navigate through the sites. The study stressed further that students spent 12 hours a day on social networking sites. In similar studies by Tuurosong and Faisal (2014); and Tawiah et al. (2014) regarding the use of social media among Ghanaian tertiary students opine that students visited Facebook and WhatsApp as communication channels.

Joinson (2008) listed seven (7) motivations as social relationships, sharing identities, posting photos, content, social research, browsing, and updates of status on social networks. It was found in the study that the youth are motivated to spend more time on Facebook for entertainment-related content. There are many reasons associated with social media use. Some users visit these platforms to update themselves with current issues, broaden their knowledge base, and for business purposes. Others also use social media for socialization, entertainment, and relaxation. According to Whiting and Williams (2013), the key factors that motivate social media users include socialization, searching for information, passing time, entertainment, and relaxation. The rest were communication, expression of opinion, exchange of information among colleagues, acquisition of knowledge, and many others. Solmaz et al. (2013) claimed that all users had social media accounts that allowed them to log into the various accounts every day and spent adequate time on these platforms. It was established that users commented on the content posted on social media platforms, chatted with colleagues, entertained themselves, spent leisure time as well as relaxation.

In the view of Reinecke et al. (2014) entertainment was one of the highest intrinsic factors for using social networking sites (SNS). Studies by Adnan et al. (2015; Al-Menayes, 2015), found enjoyment as a motivational factor, and also a key predictor of the use of social networks. The majority of social media users visited the various sites for fun as well as pleasure in their daily lives (Lin and Lu, 2011). According to Sharma and Verma (2015), young professionals and students consider these platforms as appropriate platforms for mental relaxation. Social media users visit the various platforms/sites because these sites provide them with an environment that helps them transfer their mental fatigue from daily problems and anxiety into real – life (Orchard et al., 2014).

1.3 Impact of social media usage on students' academic performances

The proliferation of social media has tremendously transformed the social and academic lives of students. A lot of studies carried out in this field have confirmed this assertion that social media has impacted the lives of students in higher educational institutions. Students benefit from social media use which helps them to get connected to their colleagues during assignments and other academic activities (O’keefee and Clake-Pearson, 2011).

However, concerning social media effects, the authors identified cyberbullying, pornography, Facebook
depression, and confidentiality issues as key challenges. Indeed, the emergence of social networks provides students with a new learning platform to chat with colleagues, discuss academic issues, and also, exchange information with teachers both within and outside the university environment. Interestingly, a similar study by Davis and Cranston (2008) also found the danger associated with using social media as criminal activities which include theft and false contacts, sexual abuse or harassment, and bad publicity.

According to Owusu-Acheaw and Agatha (2015) a large number of students visited these sites to chat and download, which had a negative impact on their academic performance. Chris (2015) in Kenyan universities indicated that 50% males and 58% of female students disagreed with the statement that social media had a negative impact on their studies; however, 32% male students and 38% of the female students agreed that social media had adversely influenced their study habits. It is an undeniable fact that students who are addicted to social media always replicate the same words or expressions they use when chatting with their colleagues on various social media platforms in their academic writings. For example, they use words like “txt to stand for text, bicus or becos to stand for because, thru to stand for through, dat to stand for that, luv to stand for love, link to stand for letting me know, @ to stand for at, walkin to stand for walking, wekin to stand for working” and many others. Horton et al. (2012) affirmed the above assertion that the adoption of Facebook has affected the way students spell certain words in English. Wood (2014) also added that the use of text message language affects students’ grammatical comprehension.

Alwagait et al. (2015) did a study on the effect of social media utilization on students’ scholastic execution in Saudi Arabia. It was established that there was no straight relationship between students’ week-by-week use of social media and their average grade points. They hinted that time management had a negative impact on students’ scholastic execution. However, Asemah et al. (2013; Okereke and Oghenetega, 2014) contend that social media use had an adverse influence on students' scholastic execution. This counter-argument by the researchers can also be accredited to factors such as lack of restrictions on the use of social media in the learning environment, or the failure of parents to monitor their wards at home. Utilization of Facebook diverts Saudi students’ attention during their studies, which negatively hinders their academic output (Akram and Albalawi, 2016).

Tariq et al. (2012) posit that the use of social networks by students consumes their time and negatively affects their academic activities. Students spend adequate time on the Facebook platform than their studies, and this led to their poor academic performance (Tarawneh, 2014). Students can use these technologies to improve their academic performance; however, they should be mindful of the number of hours they spend on these platforms since technologies have both negative and positive consequences on their studies as well as their social life.

1.4 Time spent on social media platforms by students

Time management is an important asset in all areas of human activities like any other commodity such as land and gold; therefore, students should use their time wisely and focus on their learning rather than spending too much time on non-academic activities. Kalpidou et al. (2011) conducted a study on the relationship between Facebook and the well-being of university students. It was reported that students were spending 60 – 120 minutes on the Facebook platform every day. Pempek et al. (2009) observe that students spent 30 minutes on the Facebook
platform every day as part of their daily work. It is a clear indication that students cannot stay away without visiting these platforms; it also shows the level of addiction in the use of various social media platforms which eventually affect their performance in school. Kolan and Dzandza (2018) on the impact of social media on the scholastic execution of students in Ghanaian Universities revealed that out of 197 respondents, 17 (8.6%) spent 0 to 30 minutes on social media platforms, followed by 31 (15.7%), who consumed 30 minutes to 1 hour, while 50 (25.4%) consumed 1 hour to 2 hours, whereas 99 (50.3%) spent 2 hours and more on these platforms. Junco (2012) found that 10% of students spent half an hour (1/2 hour) on social media platforms, followed by 35% who indicated that they consumed two hours (2 hours) per day on social media platforms, 25% admitted that they spent more than two hours (2 hours) and more on social media platforms. Iordache et al. (2015) did a comparative study on the use of Facebook by students in Romania and Lithuania universities. The findings showed that students spent the majority of their time on Facebook, with 66% spending between 30 minutes and 3 hours a day. Junco and Cotton (2012) established that students spent an average of 1 hour and 40 minutes a day on the Facebook platform.

Cavus and Bicen (2010) report that respondents spent less than 1 hour on the internet a day, followed by 6%, who spent 1 hour a day, whereas 10% spent hours on the internet in a day. 15% also spent 4 hours, whereas 65% spent more than 4 hours online every day. The majority of the respondents spent excessive time on the internet every day. This may be due to the type of activities they carried out, or they were addicted to social media, as Cetin (2009) pointed out that students visit the Facebook platform to entertain themselves.

2.0 Methodology

The researcher employed the cross-sectional survey approach for this study. The Valley View University Campus in the Accra Region of Ghana was used as a case study. The population of the students was two thousand, one hundred and seventy-two (2,172), this comprised 1,036 (48%) females and 1,136 (52%) males.

Out of this number, a total of three hundred and eighty-eight (388) were sampled for the study using a probability sampling technique. 388 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the students. 362 out of the 388 copies were completed correctly and considered relevant for analysis. The software adopted for data analysis was Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). The results are displayed in the form of frequency tables, percentages, and figures.

Table 1: Background of respondents

| Gender  | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------|-----------|----------------|
| Males   | 187       | 51.7           |
| Females | 175       | 48.3           |
| Total   | 362       | 100            |

Source: Field data, 2020
The results in Table 1 above show that out of 362 respondents, 187 (51.7%) were males with females accounting for 175 (48.3%).

3.0 Results and Discussions

Table 2: Factors that motivate the use of Social Media

| Factors that motivate the use of Social Media | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| For entertainment and relaxation, posting pictures and chatting with friends | 92 | 25.4 |
| To discuss academic issues with friends | 32 | 8.8 |
| Sending assignments to lecturers | 48 | 13.3 |
| A place for meeting family members | 67 | 18.5 |
| Searching for new friends | 59 | 16.3 |
| To share information with colleagues | 64 | 17.7 |
| **Total** | **362** | **100** |

*Source: Field data, 2020*

The first objective of this study was to examined factors that motivate the use of social media. The findings displayed in Table 2 established that 92 (25.4%) of the respondents use social media for entertainment and relaxation, posting pictures, as well as chatting with friends, followed by 67 (18.5%), who indicated their motivation for using social media as a place for meeting family members, and 64 (17.7%) indicated that they use social media to share information with colleagues, whereas 59 (16.3%) indicated that they use these platforms to search for new friends.

3.1 Impact of Social Media Usage on Students' Academic Performance

Table 3: Impact of social media usage on students' academic performance

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| My academic performance has been impacted positively by social media use | 72 | 19.8 |
| My academic performance has been impacted negatively by social media | 107 | 29.6 |
| It has facilitated my communication with my colleagues and lecturers | 85 | 23.5 |
| It delays the time for submission of assignments | 68 | 18.8 |
| It has enhanced group discussions | 30 | 8.3 |
| **Total** | **362** | **100** |

*Source: Field data, 2020*

The impacts of social media on students’ academic performance cannot be overlooked, because, these effects have both positive and negative sides. This section of the study was to find out the impact of social media usage on students' academic performance. The findings in Table 3 established that a larger part of the respondents, 107
(29.6%) conceded that social media had affected their academic performance negatively, followed by 85 (23.5%), who admitted that social media had facilitated their communication with colleagues and lecturers.

72 (19.8%) of the respondents expressed that their academic performance had been impacted positively through social media use. Sixty-eight (18.8%) of the respondents stated that social media delayed the submission of their assignments. It can be deduced from the results that the use of social media had negatively affected students' academic performance. However, this finding cannot be generalised since other findings indicated otherwise.

3.2 Time spent on social media platforms by students

Table 4: Time spent on social media platforms by students

| Time spent on social media platforms | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 30 minutes to 1 hour                | 85        | 23.5           |
| 1 hour to 2 hours                   | 75        | 20.7           |
| 2 hours to 3 hours                  | 43        | 11.9           |
| 3 hours to 4 hours                  | 102       | 28.2           |
| 4 hours and above                   | 57        | 15.7           |
| Total                               | 362       | 100            |

Source: Field data, 2020

Regarding the time students spent on social media platforms, the results indicated that out of the 362 respondents, 102 (28.2%) spent 3 – 4 hours on social media platforms, followed by 85 (23.5%) who spent 30 minutes to 1 hour, whereas 75 (20.7%) indicated 1 hour to 2 hours. This shows clearly that a lot of students spent excessive time on these platforms at the expense of their studies. This situation does not augur well for their academic pursuits.

3.3 Discussion

3.4 Factors that Motivate the Use of Social Media

The use of social media platforms by students may be motivated by the kind of information they seek; be it academic or social. The findings established factors that influenced social media use by students as entertainment and relaxation, posting pictures, and chatting with friends. This result corroborates with Adnan et al. (2015; Al-Menayes, 2015; Reinecke et al., 2014; Lin and Lu, 2011; Whiting and Williams, 2013; Cetin, 2009), whose findings showed that entertainment was one of the topmost intrinsic motivations, the rest: enjoyment, fun, pleasure, excitement, exchange of information and communication among colleagues were identified to be the key factors that influence users to visit social networking sites (SNSs).

Furthermore, Tnuurosog and Faisal (2014; Tawiah et al., 2014) have opined those tertiary students in Ghana were motivated to visit the Facebook and WhatsApp platforms as channels of communication. This suggests that different reasons motivate students to join their colleagues on various social media platforms/online communities.

3.5 The impact of social media use on student academic performance

The findings disclosed that a significant number of users admitted that the use of social media platforms had a negative influence on their scholastic execution. This finding is in line with the previous study by Owusu-Acheaw and Agatha (2015), which revealed that the use of social media platforms had a negative influence on the academic
performance of students. However, Chris (2015) found that the majority of students do not agree that social media is detrimental to their poor academic performance. It implies that these platforms are like a double-edged sword, it cuts both front and back, the onus lies on the individual using them.

3.6 Time spent by students on social media platforms
The study revealed that a significant number of the respondents spent 3 to 4 hours on social platforms daily. This result supports Iordache et al. (2015) whose comparative study in Romanian and Lithuanian universities showed that students spent majority of their time on Facebook. “Time and tide wait for no man,” so goes the adage. Students should minimize the duration of time they use to visit these platforms and concentrate on learning than engaging in unproductive activities.

4. Conclusion
In this technological age, the use of social media platforms has become very important due to mobile agility. The study was limited to Valley View University, Oyibi Campus in Accra. The current study has given insight into the use of social media by students. The findings have shown that many factors motivate social media use by students. These include entertainment, photo posting, chatting with friends, relaxation, and many other factors. The findings of this study will go beyond the shores of Ghana and help various university management, policymakers, parents, and stakeholders to find measures to curtail the excessive/abusive use of social media platforms by students. The study will help existing literature in this field, and also fill the gap created, and serve as a reference point for future studies.

5.0 Recommendations
Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The management of VVU should motivate students to use the various social media platforms for academic activities rather than non-academic activities such as entertainment and others.
2. Policies should be enacted by the university authorities to regulate the use of social media on university campus; especially during lectures.
3. Parents, stakeholders, opinion leaders, and university management should advise students to reduce hours spent on the social media platform.
4. Students should concentrate fully on their studies, as spending too much time on these platforms can have a negative impact on their academic performance.
5. Students should be advised not to publish their private information on social media platforms because this practice has security implications; it will also expose their personal information to the general public.
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