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INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF PUBLIC TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN GOMBE STATE

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Abstract

The study was conducted on the influence of social networking on students' academic performance of public tertiary institutions in Gombe State. The study employed the use of social learning theory and cognitive load theory as approach in studying the effects of social networking on public tertiary institutions students' academic performance. All the students of public tertiary institutions in Gombe State served as the population of the study where stratified sampling and purposive sampling were used in drawing the sample for the study. The findings of the study revealed WhatsApp and Facebook as the social networking sites that the students are most exposed to. It is also revealed that the students are on social networks for many reasons. These include establishing and sustaining relationship, keeping in touch with their friends and accessing academic resources. Also, the study exposed social networking disruption of students while reading and during lectures as the negative side of social networking on the students of public tertiary institutions' academic performance. Based on the aforementioned findings, the study recommends that students should switch off their phones while reading and during lectures so as to avoid social networking distraction of their studies.

KEYWORDS: social networking, influence, academic performance, tertiary institutions, cognitive load theory, social learning theory

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Introduction

Background of the Study

The world is today celebrating the improvement in communication technology which has broadened the scope of communication through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Modern Technology in communication has no doubt turned the entire world into a "Global village". But as it is, technology like two sides of a coin, bring with it both negative and positive sides. It helps people to be better informed, enlightened, and keeping abreast with world developments. Technology exposes mankind to a better way of doing things. Social networking sites include: Twitter, Yahoo Messenger, Facebook Messenger, and Blackberry Messenger (BBM), WhatsApp messenger, 2go messenger, Skype, Google talk, Google Messenger, iPhone and Androids. These networking sites are used by most people to interact with old and new friends, physical or internet friends. (Edegoh, 2012). 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. Out of the many things to distract students today, a key one is social media platforms, which are used now by more than 2 billion users worldwide. They feel attracted to them due to their ease-of-use, sharing features and ability to reach out to people in distant locations instantly. (Osharive 2015) Different researchers have conducted research to ascertain the influence of social media on users; for example, Moon (2011) in a study on impact of facebook on undergraduate academic performance, averred that social media have negative impact on students. According to the result, the more students use facebook, the more it affects their academic performance, Similarly Oye (2012) notes that most of the younger students use social networking sites mainly for socializing activities, rather than for academic purpose. Oye (2012) further observed that most of the students do feel that social networking sites have more positive impact on their academic performance. In another study conducted by Shana (2012), it was revealed that Students use social network mainly for making friends and chatting. The result showed that only 26 percent of the students (respondents) indicated that they use social media for academic purpose.

Today, most youths and students possess Facebook accounts. The reason most of them perform badly in school might not be far- fetched. While many minds might be quick to blame the poor quality of teachers, they might have to think even harder, if they have not heard of the Facebook frenzy (Oche & Aminu, 2010). Olubiyi (2012) noted that these days' students are so engrossed in the social media that they are almost 24 hours online. Even in classrooms and lecture theatres, it has been observed that some students are always busy pinging, 2going or Facebooking, while lectures are on.

Times that ought to be channeled towards learning, academic research and innovating have been crushed by the passion for meeting new friends online, and most times busy discussing trivial issues. Hence most students' academics suffer setback as a result of

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distraction from the social media. In (Obi, Bulus, and Adamu & Sala'at 2012), it was observed that the use of these sites also affects students' use of English and grammar. The students are used to short forms of writing words in their chat rooms; they forget and use the same in the classrooms. They use things like 4 in place of for, U in place of You, D in place of The etc. and this could affect their class assessments.

According to Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010), social network websites grab attention of the students and then diverts it towards non-educational and inappropriate actions including useless chatting. Whereas on the other hand.

Nowadays, owing to media development, the world transformed dramatically from the physical Globe to the internet globe. Websites concentrated more on establishing internet networks for Individuals with similar interests. Over the past two centuries, the extreme uses of social media have progressed in a worldwide case. Since words can mean differently in different settings, social media has been noted allowing users to disperse their ideas, opinions, interests, programs, and others, Tahrir M, Ibrahim and Norzita Yunus (2020). Simultaneously, social networking sites are an Internet use where individuals post data and are available to others, particularly for individuals who share comparable interest, Masood, Luqman, Feng, and Ali (2020). As an illustration, famous social networking sites in use are Tumblr, Facebook, Vine, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Users of social networking sites enjoy learning from the digital texts as these new media are easily accessible, portable, less costly, motivating and a number of texts can be stored in their laptop or smart phones, Greenhow and Lewin (2016). In relation to this, users of more skilled social media were college students who continuously used social media to communicate with peers and retain true relationships. Social media such as You Tube Video work as a tool for motivation, entertaining and engaging way of learning for the tertiary learners, (Md Mahadhi & Faridah Ibrahim, 2017).

In light of the above, social networking users who usually interact between friends, family and groups intend to meet distinct individuals in their dayto- day life, (Md Mahadhi et al., 2018). The dominant users of social media were contemporary generations and can be acknowledged as "digital natives" (Bou-Hamad (2020). In addition to this, users of more experienced social media were the university students who continually used Social media to interact with colleagues and maintain real relationships, (Liu, Kirschner, and Karpinski (2017). However, the true risks emerge along with the advantages of using social media among students. Social media is an exceptional instrument for student's communication and self-articulation. Although internet collaboration is for enjoyment purposes only, it is as dangerous as not having understood it by the student, (le Roux et al., (2021). Accessing social media has become a normal part of student's daily lives and the influence of social media usage and social (Henrie, Halverson, and Graham, (2015).

Social networking has become a common international trend which has spread across almost every corner of the world. The Use of Social media sites have exploded and evolved into an online platform where people create content, share it, bookmark it and

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network at a prodigious rate. Because of its ease of use, speed and reach, social media is fast changing the public discourse in society and setting trends and agenda in topics that range from the environment and politics to technology and the entertainment industry, (Ugwulebo and Okoro, 2016). In the last ten years, the online world has changed dramatically, thanks to the invention of social media, young men and women now exchange ideas, feelings, personal information, pictures and videos at a truly astonishing rate. Seventy-three percent of wired American teens now use social media websites, (Asur and Huberman, 2010). The increased use of Social Networking Websites has become a social norm and way of life for people from all over the world, (Oberst, 2010). Express the belief that "social media is an extension and explosion of Traditional word of mouth networks. Word of mouth has always been the most effective and Trust worthy means of disseminating information". Social media have become very popular in recent years, this may be attributed to increasing Proliferation and affordability of Internet enabled devices such as personal computers, mobile Devices and tablets. This is evidenced by the burgeoning popularity of many online social Media that include such social networking platforms as Facebook, collaborative projects such As Wikipedia, content communities like YouTube, blogs like Word Press, and virtual games worlds Such as World of War craft and virtual social worlds like Second Life. According to statistics By National Bureau of Statistics [NBS] (2016) as at September 2015, there were a total of 150,469,438 mobile subscribers in Nigeria. Of all users, a total of 97,212,364 had an Internet Subscription. As a result social media are becoming more and more popular especially among Students in Nigeria, (Sajithra and Patil, 2013)

Statement of the Problem

The world today is a global market in which the internet is the most important sort of information. Since the advent of social media platforms in the 1990s, it is assumed in some quarters that the academic performance of students is facing a lot of neglect and challenges. There is a deviation, distraction and divided attention between social networking activities and the student academic work. It is observed that students devote more attention to social media than they do to their studies. In the light of the above, this study explored some of the trending issues facing students' academic performance as a result of social media usage. Thus, the problem this study investigates the effects of social networking on academic performance of the students of public tertiary institutions in Gombe State.

Aim and Objectives of the Studies

The aim of the study is to examine the influence of social networking on the academic activities with a focus on public tertiary institutions in Gombe State. The specific objectives are:

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viii. To find out the reason(s) for the use of online social networks by students of public tertiary institutions in Gombe State.
ix. To find out the effects of social networking on academic activities the students of public tertiary institutions in Gombe State.
x. To find out how much time the students of public tertiary institutions in Gombe State spend on online social networks.
xi. To determine which of the network platforms the students of public tertiary institutions in Gombe State are more exposed to.

Significance of the Study

This research work was carried out with the view that the findings on the negative impact of social media on student activities will help in encouraging and educating the general public more especially the students of public tertiary institutions in Gombe State on the negative effects of social networking and the need for its implementation. It will also help in suggesting different ways of removing negativity about social media platforms.

Limitation of the Study

This research work focused strictly on the influence of online social networking on academic performance of the students of the public tertiary institutions in Gombe State. Therefore, the study is limited to the students from various public tertiary institutions for the 2023/2024 academic session that are on regular mode of study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays, owing to media development, the world transformed dramatically from the physical globe to the internet globe. Websites concentrated more on establishing internet networks for individuals with similar interests. Over the past two decades, the extreme users of social media have progressed in a worldwide case. Since words can mean differently in different settings, social media has been noted allowing users to disperse their ideas, opinions, interests, programs, and others, Masood, Luqman, Feng, and Ali (2020). Simultaneously, social networking sites are an Internet use where individuals post data and are available to others, particularly for individuals who share comparable interest Greenhow and Lewin (2016). As an illustration, famous social networking sites in use are Tumblr, Facebook, Vine, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Users of social networking sites enjoy learning from the digital texts as these new media are easily accessible, portable, less costly, motivating and a number of texts can be stored in their laptop or smart phones (Md Mahadhi & Farida Ibrahim, 2017).

The Concept of Social Media

Social media is that means that employs mobile and web based technology to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and community share co-create,

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discuss and Modifies user-generated content (Kietzmannn, 2012). Social media is a phrase being tossed around a lot. It is a website that does not just give you information but interact with you while giving you information. It is a group of internet based application that allows the creation and exchange of users generated content. It is easy to confuse social media with social news because we often refer to members of the news as the media. Adding to it, that social news site is also social media site. Some media website includes:

- **Social Networking:** interact by adding friends, commenting on photo and profiles, sharing groups for discussions (Facebook, 2go, BB chat)
- **Social Photo and Video Sharing:** interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on the user submission. (Youtube and Fliki).

Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share, exchange and comment among themselves in different networks. Andreas and Michael (2010) are of the opinion that social media is a group of internet based application that builds on the ideological foundation and allows the creation and exchange of users – generated content. Social media has become one of the major channel of chatting through platforms such as 2go, BB chat, blogger and wiki a. There has been an increase in the mobile social media which has created new opportunity for browsing.

The internet usage effect of social media, in views of Nielsen (2012) is that, students continue to spend more time on the social media than any site. The total time spent on social media across mobile devices increased by 37%, 121 billion minutes in July 2012 compared to 88 billion minutes in July 2011.

Social Networking Sites

It is used to describe any website that enables users to create public profiles within that website and form relationship with other users of the same website who access their profile. It is used to describe community base website, online discussion forum, chat rooms and other social space online. Commonly, the phrase "social networking sites" is used as an umbrella term for all social media and computer-mediated communication, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and MySpace, as well as the inaugural social networking sites of Cyworld, Bebo and Friendster.

Ellison and Boyd (2007) define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct profiles, display user connections, and search and traverse within that list of connections. A social media is an online service or platforms that focus on facilitating the building of social network among people who share interest, activities and background on real life connections. It is a website that allows users to share information within a selected group. It is a great way to stay connected and a

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convenient way to share photos from trips (Awake, 2012). It consists of a representation of each user (profiles), social links and a variety of additional services.

Features of Social Networking Sites

According to the Boyd and Ellison (2007) article entitled "Why Youth Heart, Social Networking Site: the role of networked publics in teenage life?" It shares a variety of technical features that allows individuals to construct a public or semi-public office, articulate list of their users that they share connection with and view their list of connections within the system. In an article titled 'social networking sites' definition and scholarship, Boyd and Ellison adopt Sunden's (2003) description of profiles as unique pages where one can type oneself into being a profile is generated from answer to question, such as age, location and interest. Some site allows users upload pictures', add multimedia content or modify the look of their profile. For instance, 2go allows the user to update their status and change profile pictures and BB chat that allows them change display picture, name and status. They allow them search for users and share a list of contact and there are sections dedicated to comments from friends and other users. To protect their privacy, they have a control that allows users to choose who can view their profile, contact and add them to their list of contacts.

Impacts of Social Networking Sites

Through email and instant messaging, online communities are created where a gift economy and reciprocal altruism are encouraged through co-operation. 2go and other social networking tools are increasingly the objective of scholarly research. Scholars in many fields have begun to investigate the impact of social networking site, investigating how such site may play into issues of identity, privacy, social, youth culture and education.

Several website are beginning to tap into the power of the social networking model for philanthropy. In 2011 HCL technologies conducted research that showed that 50% of British workers are banned from the use of social media during office hours. In this view, when one is chit-chatting, the content of the message reveal a lot about an individual. In chatting, comments, photos, and status should speak less of an individual. Kim in summary says: "if you are mindful of what you are doing, you can maintain a measure of privacy on a social network" (Awake, 2012); and, in reference to this, Proverbs 10:19, states that "In the abundance of words, there does not fail to be transgression, but the one keeping his in check is acting discreetly".

It's a vortex that sucks one in and one has no idea you've been trapped. One of the ironies of the internet is that it keeps you apart from the most important things'. It is a great way to stay connected with people but you just have to know when to shut it down.

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Raquel concluded that it seems that when people go on a social network they lose their mind" (Awake, 2012).

Social Network and Education

The advent of social network platforms may also be impacting the way in which learners engage with technology in general. For a number of years, Prensky (2001) dichotomy between digital natives and digital immigrants has been considered a relatively accurate representative of the ease with which people of a certain age rate, in particular, those born before and after 1980, use technology.

Social networking and their educational uses are of interest to many researchers. Living Stone and Brake (2010) in their opinion said 'social networking site, like much else on the internet representing a moving target for researchers and policy makers'. Recent trends indicate that 47% of American adults use social network. A national survey in 2009 found that 37% of online teenagers use social networking site which increased to 555% three years later (Len Hart, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr, 2010). It has also, shown that it provides opportunity within professional education but however, there are constraints in such areas.

Constraints of Social Networking in Education

In the past, social networking were viewed as a distraction and offered no educational benefit. Blocking this social network was a form of protection for students against wasting time, bullying and privacy protection. In an educational setting, 2go and BB chat is seen by instructors and educators as frivolous time wasting and distraction from school work (Osharive peter, 2015).

Cyber bullying has been an issue of concern with social networking site. An online survey based on 9-19 years old and above discovered that students received bulling comments online. Social networking, often include a lot of personal information posted publicly and many believe that sharing personal information and the easy communication vehicle that social networking opens the door to sexual predators.

However, there is evidence of contradiction to this; 69% of social media using teens and 85% adults said people are mostly kind to one another. The national school board association reports that almost 60% of the students who use social network talk about educational topics online and more than 50% talk about school work. Yet the vast majority of school district has stringent rules against nearly all forms of social media during school hours. Social networking focused on supporting relationship between teachers and students which are now used for learning. Some sites like Ning-for teachers and Term wiki-learning Centre were created to support this. Social media are also emerging as online year book for private and public use. It allows anyone from the general public to register and connect to others. It allows participant the opportunity for just in time learning and engagement and prescribed curriculum.

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The study conducted by Owusu and Agatha (2015), titled "use of social media and its impacts on academic performance of tertiary students" revealed that majority of students in Sierra Leone were engrossed in social networking sites. It also brought to light that most users utilized these sites for chatting and downloading purposes only which affected their academic performance negatively.

Benefits of Social Networking

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 (Boyd, 2007). 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 (Boyd, 2007). 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 (Boyd, 2007).

Finally, high school students use these sites as tools to obtain information and resources for graduation preparation and future planning. For example, students applying for college visit profiles of that college's students to view pictures and read blogs of past students to determine whether the college would be a good fit (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

Students' Addictiveness to Social Media

On the internet, students engage in a variety of activities some of which may be potentially addictive. (kuss and Griffiths, 2011). The mass appeal of social media on the internet could be a cause for concern, particularly when attending to the gradually increasing amount of time students spend online. Undergraduates spend more time on Facebook, Twitter and other social media through smart phones that are now in abundance among these youths. Many students cannot go for two-three hours without checking and updating their profiles on these social networks even at the detriment of other activities such as educational and career pursuit. (Morahan – Martin and Schumacher, 2000) explain social media addiction as the excessive use of the internet and the failure to control this usage which seriously harms a person's life.

In an article on the Daily Trust newspaper, Itodo (2011) posits that there seem to be an alarming rate of social networking obsession among students today; a trend that could affect their academic, social and spiritual lives negatively if not properly controlled. Many concerned parents have expressed grave concern that they could hardly get the attention of their children and wards, 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 observes that if the dangerous trend

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of social media network "obsession" if left unchecked could further affect an already collapsing education system in Nigeria. The reason students are performing poorly in school these days might not be farfetched. While poor quality of lecturers can quickly take the blame, one might think harder if the phrase "Facebook frenzy" has not been heard of. It is a common sight to see a youth chatting in sensitive and highly organized places like church, mosque and lecture venues. Some are so carried away that even as they are walking along the high way, they keep chatting. Attention has been shifted from visible to invisible friends, while important ventures like study and writing are affected in the process.

This phenomenon has become a source of worry to many who believe in knowledge and skill acquisition (McQuail 2008). Jeong (2005) noted that internet addiction is significantly and negatively related to students' academic performance, as well as emotional attributes.

In a study of 884 students of different universities in Nigeria, (Olowu & Seri 2012) indicated that students in Nigeria are spending too much time on social networking sites at the detriment of other necessary things such as their studies. They explained that Youths' use of these social networking sites even point towards obsession. The youths have made the social media their top priority and continued to need more usage in order to feel satisfied.

In Ogedebe, Emmanuel & Musa (2012), a study on Facebook and Academic Performance in Nigeria Universities was carried out on 122 university students; they tested six hypotheses to know the effect of Facebook on the academic performance of students in selected universities. The study tested among other hypotheses that the more time a student spends on Facebook, the lower his or her grade point average will be.

In Olubiyi (2012), the author observed that the bone of contention of the social media is the obsessive attitude of Nigerian youths towards its use. He pointed out that students waste their time through idle chats and other immoral acts. Students are so engrossed in the social media networks that they are almost 24 hours online. Even in classrooms and lecture theatres, it has been observed that some students are always busy pinging, 2going or Facebooking, while lectures are on. The result is that quality time that ought to be spent on academic research and other productive networking is lost.

Students Exposure to Social Media

It has been observed in recent times that students have unlimited access to the internet as well as the social media. Students connect with computer to send and receive information's anywhere on the globe. The manufacturing and distribution of equally sophisticated cellular phones has complicated the situation, as students no longer need to visit a cybercafé before they send and receive messages. Some schools are so equipped that there is internet connection made available within the school premises as well as in the library. Online Wikipedia and blogs are the main resource

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centers for students as attention have been shifted from making research in the library to overall dependence on theses social platforms. It is a common thing to see a student reading in the library and putting the books aside on hearing the sound of a ping on the phone.

According to a joint study by Campus2Careers and Study Breaks on the use of mobile devices among students discovered that, an average undergraduate spend 3-6 hours a day with their cell phones and smartphones, while spending less time with computers, TV's, handheld gaming devices and e-readers.

Influence of Social Media Network on Students' Academic Performance

Though there have been many social, economic, and environmental factors that have added to the pressure of tertiary institutions students in the past ten years, the drop-out rate for students is still a major national problem (Bowen, 2008). Current statistics show that university students in Nigeria are under increased pressure due to higher academic standards in other countries, and it has become more important than ever for educators to encourage graduation and further education (Bowen, 2008). However, with more and more students being preoccupied with social media networks and technological social lives, how will this affect their studies? It is estimated that even those students who do graduate high school, one out of three does not have possess the knowledge and skills that would lead him or her to the next level, such as college or an advanced trade school (Bowen, 2008).

The top academic areas that many school professionals are concerned about are English (ELA) and advanced literacy (Williams, 2008). The current generations of teens live in a fast-paced technological world with many different types of communication happening all at the same time. For example, he or she may be on the computer on a SNS, while also talking on the phone, sending instant messages to a friend, and emailing someone else all at the same time (Williams, 2008). While there may be some advantages to this, such as the teen learning how to type faster and multi-task many things at once, there may also be a breakdown in much of that communication (Williams, 2008).

Literacy has also taken a dive in the past decade, which has caused many educators to question what can be done to help students improve their reading, writing, speaking, and thinking- all of the most basic skills for a successful future (Wise, 2009). As one researcher stated, "Literacy is, in reality, the cornerstone of student achievement, for any student, in any grade" (Wise, 2009, 373). The question that many school professionals have with regards to communication is whether or not a tertiary institution student is able to follow school curriculum in courses like English or Language Arts (Williams, 2008). Also, will it be possible to teach them without the use of multi-tasking and using new forms of technology.

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Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework according to Ennis (1999) as cited in Mingle and Adams (2015) "is a structure that identifies and describes the major elements, variables, or constructs that organize your scholarship. It is used to hypothesize, understand, or give meaning to the relationships among the elements that influence, affect, or predict the events or outcomes you specify.

The theoretical framework grows out of the research focus, guides the design of individual studies, and structures your research presentations and publications". This study adopted the use of Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) and Cognitive Load Theory (CLT).

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory (SLT), according to Isrhs.net (n.d.), focuses on the learning that occurs within a social context. It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modelling. Among others Albert Bandura is considered the leading proponent of this theory (Yu et al., 2010 cited in Mingle and Adams, 2015) said that "Social Learning Theory views learning as a social process that individuals will self-initiate, regulate learning and actively construct knowledge by acquiring, generating, and structuring information".

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT)

Cognitive load theory had a theoretical precedence in the educational and psychological literature, well before Sweller's 1988 article. Even Baddeley and Hitch (1974) considered "concurrent memory load" but Sweller's cognitive load theory was the first to consider working memory, as it related to learning and the design of instruction (Swezller, 1994).

University students fall within the group that literature suggests are heavy users of the social media (Ufuophu-Biri and Iwu, 2014). Social media use among the college student population has become increasingly popular in this current generation and has led to a multitasking trend (Hanson et al., 2011). And, some researchers suggest that a negative relationship exists between multitasking schoolwork and social media use. Multitasking can impact student learning capabilities by causing students to be distracted from their schoolwork and adding excess load on the brain (Wood et al., 2012).

Meanwhile, Social Learning Theory and Cognitive Load Theory will be employed in this study as an approach in studying the effect of online social networking on academic activities of the students of public tertiary institutions in Gombe State.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The design used for this research was descriptive survey; a set of questionnaires were designed in gathering of data, which contained collection of data from the students of all the public tertiary institutions in Gombe State.

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The Study Area

The study was conducted on the students of all the nine (9) public tertiary institutions in Gombe State.

Population of the Area of the Study

Population, according to Adefila (2008) refers to "the entire number of the members or elements in which the researcher is interested". Thus, the population of this study was all the students of nine public tertiary institutions in Gombe State for 2023/2024 academic session who are on regular mode of study, which was fifty three thousand and twenty (53,020) students.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Sample is a limited number of elements selected from a population, which is a representative of that population (Ndagi, 1984, p. 75 cited in Asemah, et al. 2012, p. 151). During the course of this study, the researchers employed the use of Purposive Sampling to complement Stratified Sampling.

Stratified Sampling "is a probability sampling technique wherein the researcher divides the entire population into different subgroups or strata, then randomly selects the final subjects proportionally from the different strata" (Exlorable.com, n.d.). Stratified Sampling, according to Asema, et al., (2012) is used to obtain a greater degree of representativeness and it ensures that different groups in the population are adequately represented. It also permits analysis by sub division of strata, rather than just ramdomising across them… the researcher can represent not only the overall population but also, key sub groups of the population, especially small minority groups. (pp. 178 – 179).

Stratified Sampling is used in this study to help draw the representative sample, this helped ensured that the students from various public institutions in the state are adequately represented and it enable the researchers analysed the data in relation to these different institutions.

While the study employed purposive sampling in generating information that best met the purpose of the study. In Purposive Sampling, "the researcher uses his or her judgement to choose respondents and selects those that best meet the purpose of the study" (Asemah, et. al., 2012, p. 187).

Sample Size

Using Stratified Sampling technique, the following formula helped the researchers in drawing the appropriate sample:

$$\frac{\text{Sample size x sub-group population (total number of students in each institution)}}{\text{Total population}}$$

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- 200 x 2,683 ÷ 53020 = 10 = ten students from GSCOE Billiri
- 200 x 8,559 ÷ 53020 = 32 = thirty two students from FCE(T)
- 200 x 4,436 ÷ 53020 = 17 = seventeen students from FCH Dadinkowa
- 200 x 12,987 ÷ 53020 = 49 = forty nine students from FUK
- 200 x 2,964 ÷ 53020 = 11 = eleven students from GSCOELS, Nafada
- 200 x 959 ÷ 53020 = 04 = four students from GSCHT Kaltungo
- 200 x 432 ÷ 53020 = 02 = two students from GSCNM
- 200 x 1326 ÷ 53020 = 05 = five students from GSP Bajoga
- 200 x 18,674 ÷ 53020 = 70 = seventy students from GSU

Meanwhile, the sample size of this study was a total of two hundred respondents drawn from nine public tertiary institutions in Gombe State that participate in online social networking. This delimits the study to a purposive manageable size.

Research Instrument

A well-constructed and self-developed questionnaire was used to get the required information from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A was for collection of information on personal data of respondents while section B consisted of questions that produced responses from the respondents based on the research objectives.

Method of Data Collection

The study collected all the needed data using questionnaires administered to the respondents. The researchers carried out the administration of the questionnaire.

Method of Data Analysis

The study employed the use of quantitative data analysis method. The data collected from the completed and returned questionnaires were thoroughly checked, presented, analyzed and quantified in analytical form using statistical tables. Quantitative data analysis "is helpful in evaluation because it provides quantifiable and easy to understand results" (Pell Institute, 2016).

The use of tables also helped the researchers in presenting large amount of information in a small and convenient space, thus, giving the reader or any other person that comes into contact with the research work the ability to comprehend and interpret the data without much stress.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter contains the presentation, analysis and discussion of data collected from the field through questionnaire administered to the students of public tertiary institutions in

Gombe State that participate in online social networking. The responses gathered from the respondents through the questionnaires are analyzed based on tabular illustrations using simple percentage method.

The questionnaires contained eight (8) questions on related issues about the influence of social networking on academic performance and three (3) questions on demographic characteristics of the respondents. A total number of two hundred (200) questionnaires were self-administered and all (200) were filled and returned. In this regard, two hundred (200) questionnaires formed the basis for this research analysis.

Table 1: Institution

Institution	Frequency	Percentage
Federal College of Education (FCE, Technical) Gombe	32	16%
Federal College of Horticulture (FCH), Dadinkowa	17	8.5%
Federal University of Kashere (FUK)	49	24.5%
Gombe State College of Education (GSCOE), Billiri	10	5%
Gombe State College of Education and Legal Studies (GSCOELS), Nafada	11	5.5%
Gombe State College of Health Technology (GSCHT), Kaltungo	04	2%
Gombe State College of Nursing and Midwifery (GSCNM)	02	1%
Gombe State Polytechnic (GSP), Bajoga	05	2.5%
Gombe State University (GSU)	70	35%
TOTAL	**200**	**100%**

Source: field survey, 2023.

Data in table 1 above shows that 70 (35%) of the respondents are the students of Gombe State University, 49 (24.5%) are from FUK, 32 (16%) from FCE (T), 17 (8.5%) from FCH Dadinkowa, 11 (5.5%) from GSCOELS Nafada, 10 (5%) from GSCOE Billiri, 5 (2.5%) from GSP Bajoga, 4 (2%) from GSCHT Kaltungo and finally, 2 (1%) students from GSCNM.

Table 2: Sex Distribution

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	108	54%
Female	92	46%
Other	-	-
Total	200	100%

Source: field survey, 2023

The table 2 above shows that 108 (54%) of the respondents constitute male respondents, while 92(46%) of the respondents are female. This shows that majority of the respondents are male.

Table 3: Age Distribution

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
17yrs and below	17	8.5
18 – 27 years	157	78.5
28 – 37 years	19	9.5
38 – 47 years	07	3.5
48yrs and above	200	100

Source: field survey, 2023

As seen in table 157 (78.5%) of the respondents constituting the majority, fall within the age range of 18 – 27 years, 19 (9.5%) of the respondents are those who fall between the age of 28 years and 37. 17 (8.5%) of the respondents were between age 17 – below, and 7 (3.5%) is between the age range of 48 years and above.

Table 5: Most Preferred Social Network

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	62	31
Instagram	06	3
linkedIn	03	1.5
Pinterest	02	1
Snapchat	09	4.5
Tiktok	07	3.5
Twitter	07	3.5
WhatsApp	97	48.5
Youtube	07	3.5
Other	-	-
TOTAL	200	100%

Source: field survey, 2023

Based on the table 4 above, WhatsApp was the most preferred social networking platform with 97 (48.5%) of the respondents, followed by Facebook 62 (31%).

Table 6: Reasons for Social Networking

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Establishing and sustaining relationship	26	13
Keeping in touch with friends	38	19
Accessing academic resources	34	17
All of the above	98	49

Others	04	2
TOTAL	200	100%

Source: field survey, 2023

According to the table above, 98 (49%) of the respondents constituting the majority of the respondents, indicate that they are on social networking to establish and sustain relationship, keep in touch with their friends and access academic resources. While 38 (19%) of the respondents are on social network to keep in touch with their friends only, 34 (17%) are to only access academic resources and 26 (13%) are to establish and sustain relationship. Other respondents 4 (2%) revealed that they are on social mainly for news and current happenings.

Table 7: Positive influence of Social Networking on Academic Performance

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Information about rescheduled lecture	39	19.5
Discussing academic issues	25	12.5
Sending/receiving assignment questions	29	14.5
Accessing academic resources	34	17
All of the above	73	36.5
None of the above	-	-
Others	200	100%

Source: field survey, 2023

The table above indicates that social networking influence the academic activities of 73 (36.5%) of the respondents positively by providing information about rescheduled lecture time, discussing academic issues, sending/receiving assignment questions and accessing academic resources. Social networking influence the academic activities of another 39 (19.5%) of the respondents by providing information about rescheduled lecture only.

Table 8: Negative Influence of Social Networking on Academic Performance

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distraction from reading	76	38
Distraction from paying attention during lectures	60	30
All of the above	64	32
None of the above	-	-
Others	200	100%

Source: field survey, 2023

According to table 8 above, 76 (38%) being the majority of the respondents, were negatively influenced on their academic activities by social networks by distracting them when reading and 64 (32%) said social networks influence their academic activities negatively by distracting them from paying attention during lectures and also distracting them from reading.

Table 9: Ways to Avoid Social Networking Disruption of Studies

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Switch off phone when studying	40	20
Stay offline	80	40
Distance self from phone	55	27.5
All of the above	18	9
Others	7	3.5
TOTAL	200	100

Source: field survey, 2023

The above table shows that 80 (40%) of the respondents stay offline in order to avoid social network disruption of their studies, while 40 (20%) switch off their phone when studying. 55 (27.5%) of the respondents distance themselves from their phones to avoid social network disruption of their studies. Other 7 (3.5%) reveal that they put their phones on silent or vibration.

Table 10: Time Spent on Social Networks Daily

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 5 hours	36	18%
6 – 10 hours	51	25.5%
11 – 15 hours	50	25%
16 – 20 hours	49	24.5%
21 – 24 hours	14	7%
TOTAL	200	100%

Source: field survey, 2023

Table 9 above shows that 50 (25%) of the respondents spent 11 – 15 hours on social network daily, 49 (24.5%) spent 16 – 20 hours, 51 (25.5%) spent 6 – 10 hours, while 18 (36%) spent 1 – 5 hours daily. Only 14 (7%) spent 21 – 24 hours online daily.

Table 11: Effect of Time Spent on Social Networks on Academic Performance

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive	53	26.5
Negative	56	28

Positive and negative	91	45.5
Total	200	100

Source: field survey, 2023

According to the table above, 91 (45.5%) of the respondents admit that the time they spend on social networks affects their academic activities both positively and negatively. 56 (28%) assure that the time they spent on social networks affect their academic activities negatively, while only 53 (26.5%) say it affects their academic activities positively.

Discussion of Findings

The demographic characteristics of the respondents analysed above shows that majority of the respondents are male and fall within the age range of 18 and 27.

Reasons for the Use of Online Social Networks by the Students

The findings of the study reveal that majority of the respondents participate in multiple online social networks such as the WhatsApp and Facebook. Others admit that they participate in other platforms such as twitter, LinkedIn, Tiktok, Youtube, Snapchat, Instagram and Pinterest. While the findings in table 4 reveal that most of the respondents choose either WhatsApp or Facebook as their favourite social networking sites. This is supported by findings of Steinfield et al., (2008) who found out that "Facebook is the most popular and preferred social network site among university students across ages" (cited in Alhazmi and Rahman, 2012).

The study further found out that some of the respondents are on social networks to only keep in touch with their friends; while the majority of the respondents indicate that they are on social networks for many reasons. These include establishing and sustaining relationship, keeping in touch with their friends and accessing academic resources. Other reason for online social networking as revealed by the study is getting informed about current happenings. These findings are in consistent with the findings of Yeomans and Wheeler (2008) cited in (Mugahed & Shahizan, n.d.) who recognized four major advantages of social media use in higher education that include enhancing relationship, improving learning motivation, offering personalized course material, and developing collaborative abilities.

Positive Influence of Online Social Networking on Students' Academic Performance

The study found out in table 7 above that social networking influences the academic activities of students of public tertiary institutions in Gombe State in many positive ways. Majority of the respondents admit that social networking influence their activities positively in varieties of ways such as providing information about rescheduled lecture time, discussing academic issues, sending/receiving assignment questions and accessing academic resources. This relates to the findings by Asad, Mamun and Clement (2012) who

indicate that students gained more vocabulary and improved their writing skills as a result of their participation on social networks. This will be achieved through the exchange of assignments, resources and discussions on academic work and other issues on social networks among students.

Negative Influence of Online Social Networking on Students Academic Performance

The findings of the study indicate that the majority of the respondents were negatively influenced on their academic activities by social networks. This is because it distracts them when they are reading. This relates with study by Forge Press (2014), who found out that 76 percent of students are distracted by the social media to a significant degree because they checked and responded to an email or social media alert while studying.

Ways to Avoid Social Network Disruption of Studies

The findings in table 9 suggest ways through which students avoid the distraction of their studies by social networks, were it shows that some of the respondents stay offline in order to avoid social network disruption of their studies, while others switch off their phones when studying. Other findings reveal putting phones in silent or vibration as ways to avoid social network disruption of studies. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Barba (2013), who suggests ways to avoid distraction by social networks. These include deleting unnecessary applications on phone, blocking access to or limiting the amount of time spend on certain websites, turning off the internet, constantly refining and editing email and social media filters, and scheduling time for distraction.

Time Spend on Social Networks and Academic Performance of the Students

The study found out that most of the respondents are using social networks for 6 – 10 hours a day, while findings in table 10 show that the time spent on social networks by 69% of the respondents affects their academic activities both positively and negatively. This is in consistent with a study by Mehmood and Taswir (2013), who found out that "the use of technologies such as social media networks and the Internet is one of the most important factors that can influence educational activities of students positively or adversely".

SUMMARY

This research work examined the influence of online social networking on students' academic performance with students of public tertiary institutions in Gombe State as a case study. Survey research method was adopted as the methodology of the study. The purposive sampling and stratified sampling techniques were employed, where a close-ended multi-optional self-administered questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection from the sample of two hundred (200) respondents out of fifty three thousand and twenty (53020) students of tertiary institutions in Gombe State. The data collected

formed the basis for data presentation, analysis and discussions. It contained the findings on the influences of online social networking on students' academic performance. The findings as presented revealed that most of the students use social networks to establish and sustain relationship, keep in touch with their friends and access academic resources. The study also found out that social networking influence the academic performance of the students both positively and negatively. It does so positively by providing information about rescheduled lecture time, discussing academic issues, sending/receiving assignment questions and accessing academic resources. On the other hand, it influences their academic activities negatively by distracting them when they are reading. The findings of the study also show that the time spent on social networks affects the academic activities of majority of the respondents both positively and negatively.

CONCLUSION

This study uncovered some of the numerous reasons and influences of online social networking on students' academic performance. The study concludes that the students of public tertiary institutions in Gombe State use online social networks for establishing and sustaining relationship, keeping in touch with their friends and accessing academic resources. They mostly spent 6 – 10 hours on social networks daily and it affects their academic activities both positively and adversely.

However, the study also reveals ways to avoid social network disruption of studies. These include putting phones in silent and switching it off when studying.

RECOMMENDATION

Having understood the numerous reasons and influence of online social networking on students' academic performance, it should be noted that various authorities and scholars have advanced recommendations based on their research findings. Meanwhile, the following recommendation will be a contribution to the existing ones:

- Based on the aforementioned findings, this study recommends that students should switch off their phones while reading and during lectures so as to avoid social networking distraction of their studies.

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