



CONVENTION OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SPOTS BY UNIVERSITIES STUDENTS IN A DEPRESSED ECONOMY IN GOMBE STATE

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Abstract

The investigated the use of social networking sites by students in enhancing the learning of Economics in the Universities in Gombe state. The study adopted descriptive survey design. Five research questions and one hypothesis were formulated for the study. The population of the study was 52 economics education students of the departments of Social Science Education in Universities in Gombe state, no sampling was done as the number of respondent was manageable and were all used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. Mean, standard deviation and percentages were used to analyze the data collection. The findings disclose that students practice for the nonacademic purpose and the mostly used SNSs by students is face-book. The major obstacle responsible for poor utilization for the educational purpose is limited knowledge of ICT skills. It was recommended that training should be organized and high-speed internet connectivity should be made available with steady electricity within the learning environment to enhance usage.

Keywords: Economics, Social Networking, Education and Attractive



Background of the Study

Economics is a lively subject, which touches our lives daily. It is a chastisement concern with allocation, distribution, and consumption of productive resources and how the resources can be used to improve income, satisfaction, and change in behavior for a better interaction (Meaner – man, Papa & Webber, 2013). It is due to this reason that Economics was added as a secondary school subject. Importance of the subject demands that the subject is taught in a realistic manner by employing newer instructional media in order to achieve the objectives of setting out the subject. The modern-day higher education consist of numerous objectives to attain, including: the need to benefit from quality assurance processes, to guarantee the research probity of institutions, to meet the needs of deferent kinds of students that have higher prospect of their learning experience, and to struggle to provide students with the necessary skills (Jephias, Juliet & Loveness, 2010). In order to attain these objectives, there is a need to employ newer media in the teaching and learning process. The media has been made possible by technology.

Technology is the application of information design in a manner that will enhance the production and utilization of goods and services in an electronic form for the purpose of organize human activities for the satisfaction of human wants. It has a positive effect in all sectors of economic, social activities and education. Technology in the area of the internet has facilitated the quick delivery of learning and dissemination of

information and knowledge in a way that was not previously possible according to Temitayo (2013). For instance, the internet facilities/access in the Universities in Gombe state has made effective the dissemination of information via school's internet web page. Communication nowadays is very important because it make man interaction with his environment to be smooth and less stressful. Hence, communication among teachers, friends, professional groups, and students provide an opportunity for people to identify their ideas and achieve a common goal (Jephias, Juliet & Loveness, 2010).

The main independent of education is to transfer knowledge through adequate communication which comprises envying of information, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to the assimilator. To achieve this objective, modern technologies which have the potential to affect the teaching and learning process – like Social Networking Sites can be employed. The term, 'Social Networking Sites' (SNSs) is an internet based location that communicates. It is also those internet-based services that kick online social interaction between two or more persons for the purpose of togetherness, swap information, and friendship. It consists of devices that allow individuals to create a personal profile for public consumption; it serves as a medium to communicate to users; it creates an avenue for the users to look for another user based on their criteria (Zwart, Lindsay, Henderson & Phillips, 2011; Boyd, & Ellison, 2007). Examples of these sites (SNSs) that meet the previously



stated criteria includes Facebook, Acedemia, Whatsapp, YouTube, Blogs, Acedemia.edu, Google+, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.

Through the internet, people can have an easy connection with many around the world by means of a network that is the positive effect of the invention of technology. Information can be disseminated to anybody with limited cost. From the statistical evidence of the Federal Bureau Investigation, over 200 different sites are used for social networking (Duvén & Timm, 2008) and thus, many people have incorporated this social networking in their daily activities because of its advantages.

The role social networking sites play in education is innumerable. It permits educational researchers to have a positive outcome of their research work. Secondly it alleviates the problem of information dissemination through the provision of internet service. Moreover, it has bridge the distance encountered in reaching one another, so, people can communicate easily no matter the distance, individually or group communication. (Shahrimaz, 2010). Social Networking Sites (SNSs) assist in transferring huge information to a group of people at the same time. Therefore, social networking sites play the role of boosting communication among a large number of people at the same time by making reports visible instantly. All these are made possible through sites like Academia, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, and so on.

Regardless of the advantages of social networking, Turkle (2008) caution against the potential pitfalls such as Cyber-bullying, identify theft, internet addiction, and tethering etc.

Turkle initiated the term “tethering” which deals with when individuals rely on online socialization due to uninterrupted engagement on the real world. Some of the disadvantages of tethering include invasion of privacy, unauthorized disclosure of personal information, internet addiction disorder, cyber-stalking etc. All of these are dangers encountered in the use of social networking services in education (Doherty, 2010).

The advantages of the invention of technology in economics sectors outrank the disadvantages. There are studies that reviewed that ‘blogs like Nairaland improve student collaboration and reflection’ (Martindale & Wiley, 2005; Orevac, 2003). Nevertheless, constructivist learning enhances students’ interaction within the classroom environment and social Networking sites give a platform that allows an individual to experience collaborative learning outside the classroom environment (Krause, 2006). Based on this, learning through Social Networking Sites give rise to shared experiences where people can stay in their different environment and acquire new knowledge. Students use these sites without knowing its educational purposes. Hence, there is need for students to know the different ways learning can take place through Social Networking Sites. There are



individual differences in learning and Social Networking Sites provide enough application software and resources that will accommodate all the learning styles for effective learning outcomes.

Economic is a social science subject that equips an individual with life skills for meaningful living in the society. The subject is two dimensional, theoretical and quantitative, full of abstract concepts. For the objective of introducing this subject to be achieved, there is a need to employ newer media in its instruction such as the use of social networking site. This media will expose both the learner to newer ideas about concepts or ideas, increase collaborative learning, simplify abstractions, encourage teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction and enhance performance in economics. This study investigated the possible role of SNS such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Academia.edu, Blogs, YouTube, Whatsapp, and Google+ etc. that can enhance the learning of Economics.

Siemens (2005), propounded connectives learning theory and his interest is to transmute teaching and learning in order to change the society and classroom environment to suit this era of technology. His research was based on e-learning to eliminate the difficulty and stress encountered in the learning process. He argued that the existing theories did not render the characteristics involves in the new pedagogy in which e-learning is among. The education industry is advancing every day since the invention of technology. More

so, connectives is the integration of principles explored by chaos, network, and complexity and self-organization theories (Siemens, 2005). Nodes and connections are the concepts used to define learning. He further buttressed that learning occurs through connections within the network. The connectives theorist is being driven by the understanding and acquisition of new information is assured and there will be an ability to differentiate the unimportant ideas from the important ideas. To Siemens, learning is a communal activity and that connections and consecutiveness within networks lead to learning. Thus, knowledge is distributed among networks. Based on connectivism theory, learning occurs through connections within networks. Therefore, social networking sites create an avenue for teachers and students to connect, share knowledge and information on this sites which thereby lead to learning. For instance, the sharing of course related materials, topic discussion, and active connectivity are made possible by the utilization of social networking sites like Facebook, Whatsapp, LinkedIn, My Space, etc., which can lead to effective learning. Hence, this study investigates the use of social networking sites by students in enhancing the learning in the Universities in Gombe state.

Statement of the Problem

The convention of the social networking spots by almost every facet of life is increasing rapidly as it has made the world flat and has helped reduce the gap between countries of very accessibility. However, social networking sites are mostly used by



the youths of this generation for various activities as motivated by their immediate needs. Such needs can be the need for identification, recognition, needs to know, self-improvement, socialization, peer mentoring, gambling, model mentoring, dating (relationship), job seeking, information dissemination etc.

It has been observed that students' often use of social networking for different purposes. This may include; searching for a date, chatting, gambling, and posting of self-information, spreading of rumors, examination malpractice, cyber-bullying, multitasking-combination of reading and chatting, all in the name of killing boredom. This distracts them during lectures. Over dependence of students on the information gotten from these sites is worrisome because they may not have educational value to students. These affects their learning outcome and subsequently contributes to the high drop-out rate from the programmes (Okon & Nwizu, 2015) it is also possible that students are not aware of the other use of these sites or that they are not aware of the various social networking site that is educational. Some students may be using some of these sites without knowing its impact in their learning.

This study therefore accessed the use of social networking sites by students in enhancing the learning of Economics in the Universities in Gombe state the essence of this assessment is to find out the SNSs they use and for what propose. This study will create awareness to the students on

educational value or advantages of social networking sites and how it can be used to enhance learning of Economics instead of using it aimlessly.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to find out the use of social networking sites on Universities in Gombe state in enhancing the learning of Economics. Specifically, the study intends to find out:

1. The social networking sites used by students.
2. The educational uses of social networking sites by students.
3. The non-educational uses of social networking sites by students.
4. The role of social networking sites in enhancing the learning of Economics.
5. Some of the obstacles that hinder the use of social networking sites among the students.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed to guide the study

1. What are the social networking spots used by students?
2. What are the educational uses of social networking spots by students?
3. What are non-educational uses of SNS by students?
4. What role do SNSs play in enhancing the learning of Economics?
5. What are some of the obstacles that hinder the use of Social networking sites among the students?



Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There will be no significant difference between the mean responses of the students on the use of social networking sites in enhancing the learning of economics in the Universities in Gombe state

Methodology

The research is a descriptive survey which investigated the use of social networking sites by students of Universities in Gombe state in enhancing the learning of Economics. The population of the study consisted of 54 Education Economics students. All the 54 students were used for the study since their number is manageable.

Result

The results of the research questions are presented below:

Research question 1: What are the SNS used by students?

Table 1: Students responses on the SNSs used by them (N = 54)

S/N	Item	F	%YES	F	%NO
1.	Facebook	53	98.1	1	1.9
2.	Whatsapp	53	98.1	1	1.9
3.	Academia.edu	9	16.1	45	83.3
4.	Linked.In	11	20.4	43	79.6
5.	Blogs	25	46.3	28	51.9
6.	Google+	39	72.2	14	25.9
7.	Twitter	25	46.3	29	53.7
8.	YouTube	40	74.1	12	22.2



Table 1 revealed that all the items 1, 2, 6 and 8 with 98.1%, 98.1%, 1% 72.2% & 74.1% respectively are the SNS mostly used by students. While item 3, 4, 5 & 7 with 16.1%, 20.46%, 24.3% and 46.3% respectively are less used by students.

Research questions 2: What are the educational uses of SNSs by students?

Table 2: Students responses on the educational uses of SNSs

N=54

S/N	Educational uses of SNS by students	MEAN (X)	SD	Decision
1.	Use of SNS to submit your assignments	2.2222	.88310	REJECTED
2.	Use of SNS to source for materials for your assignments/project	1.6111	.73758	REJECTED
3.	Use of SNS to purchase educational materials	2.0556	.87775	REJECTED
4.	SNS to share course-related materials with my course mates	1.7593	.69866	REJECTED
5.	To form course-related discussion groups with my fellow students	2.0000	.93162	REJECTED
6.	SNS to keep up to date with new developments in my academics	1.5556	.74395	REJECTED
7.	Use of SNS to read educational news	1.6481	.73092	REJECTED
8.	Use of SNS to discuss course-related matters with my lecturers	2.3889	.87775	REJECTED

Research Question 3: What are the non-educational uses of SNSs by students?

Table 3: Students responses on the non-education uses of SNSs N= 54

S/N	Items	Mean (x)	SD	Decision
1	Use of SNS to kill boredom	2.6296	.108673	ACCEPTED
2	Use of SNS to broadcast news	3.4815	.63664	ACCEPTED
3	Purchasing of non-educational materials through SNS, like phones	1.8704	.97218	REJECTED
4	To upload picture and update my profile	2.5370	.81757	ACCEPTED
5	Use of SNS to socialize with friends	3.3889	.52787	ACCEPTED
6	Use of SNS to get entertainment news	3.4444	.53787	ACCEPTED
7	Use of SNS for dating	2.5185	1.04142	ACCEPTED
8	Downloading pictures, videos and music from SNS	3.4825	.74582	ACCEPTED
9	Playing games on SNS	3.7963	.76182	ACCEPTED



From table 3 above, items 3 with mean scores of 1.8704 shows the non-educational uses of SNSs by students as it is rejected because of it is below the benchmark of 2.50 while items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 with mean scores of 2.6296, 3.4815, 2.5370, 3.3889, 3.4444, 2.5185, 3.4825 and 3.7963 shows the non-educational uses of SNSs by students as they are all accepted because they are above the benchmark of 2.50.

Research question 4: What role does SNSs play in enhancing the learning of Economics?

Table 4: Student responses on the role SNSs play in enhancing the learning of economics

N = 54

S/N	Items	MEAN (N)	SD	Decision
1.	SNS enhances the dissemination of information about the courses and timetable	1.6481	.70463	REJECTED
2.	SNS promotes immediate feedback from the lecturer for clarification on topics	2.3148	.94817	REJECTED
3.	SNS allow students to approach the teacher/staff more easily and ask questions	2.5556	.94503	ACCEPTED
4.	The use of SNS allows me to express my opinions and views more freely than in a classroom	2.4815	1.09442	REJECTED
5.	The use of SNS motivates me to work harder in the subject	2.2407	.90980	REJECTED
6.	The use of SNS increases my interest in economics courses	1.8704	.67422	REJECTED
7.	The use of SNS has been used for the learning of abstract contents of the subjects	1.8148	.72876	REJECTED
8.	SNS facilitates learning of theoretical aspect of economics	1.8704	.70165	REJECTED



From the table above, item 3 only with mean scores of 2.5556 show the role of SNSs play in enhancing the learning of Economics while 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 roles were rejected by the students because they are below of 2.50.

Research questions 5: What are some obstacles that hinder the use of SNS among students?

Table 5: Some obstacles that hinder the use SNS among students

N = 54

S/N	Items	MEAN (X)	SD	Decision
1.	Limited internet facilities	2.7074	.81307	ACCEPTED
2.	Lack of adequate power supply	3.3519	.58785	ACCEPTED
3.	Financial constraints	2.5741	.56974	ACCEPTED
4.	Lack of technical skills	2.6741	.79745	ACCEPTED
5.	Fear of privacy invasion	2.8444	.94503	ACCEPTED
6.	Poor knowledge of the educational use of SNS	3.0926	.89587	ACCEPTED
7.	Lack of motivation on the part of lecturers	2.2778	.99843	REJECTED
8.	Poor educational funding	1.9444	.974935	REJECTED

From the table above, item 1 – 6 with mean scores of 2.7074, 3.3519, 2.5741, 2.6741, 2.8444 and 3.0926 respectively shows that there are some obstacles that hinder the use of SNS among students while items 7 and 8 with mean scores of 2.2778 and 1.9444 shows that lack of motivation on the part of lecturers and poor education funding are not obstacles that hinder the use of SNSs among students.

Discussion of Findings

This study revealed from research question one that the major social networks used by students mostly are, Facebook, Whatsapp and Google+. This could be as a result of the poor knowledge of the different types of SNSs and their functioning. This implies that most of the students find it difficult in knowing the SNSs that will meet their need in a given circumstance. For instance, most students who are looking for part-time or full time job via SNSs without the knowledge of LinkedIn and sites will find SNSs unhelpful. The finding conforms to Duvén and Timm

(2008) who believe that only a few of the SNSs are common users in Nigeria.

The finding from research question 2 revealed that the major educational uses of SNSs by students were all rejected it could be as a result of poor knowledge of the use of SNS or inadequate internet facilities. Moreover, table 3 reveals that their major non-educational uses of SNS that were accepted are to kill boredom, to broadcast news, to upload pictures and update their profile, to socialize with friends to get entertainment news, for dating and to download pictures, videos and music. This could be as a result of lack of exposure of academic usage of SNSs on the part of the student. The implication of this finding especially that of students is that the more students use SNSs for non-academic purposes, the more they experience situations similar to that which Awake (2007) reported, and these include online teasing, harassing, gossip, cyber bullying etc.

The findings from research question 3 reveal that the extent students use SNS for the academic purpose is to a



high extent. The implication of this finding is that the teaching-learning process is gradually moving from the traditional setting method to the modern technology era which improves students' engagement.

The result from research question 4, show that SNS does not play a significant role in enhancing the learning of economics. The individual and grand means of both questionnaires which are far below the threshold of 2.5 shows that the role SNSs plays in enhancing the learning of economics is very insignificant. This refutes to the findings of Selwyn (2007); Ajan and Hartshone (2008) which are of the view that SNSs possess features that are practically important for education which includes; sharing of information, cooperation, and active participation etc. Thus, the only significant role SNSs play in enhancing the learning of economics is allowing students to approach the teacher/staff more easily and ask questions which are commonly done by using Facebook and Whatsapp. Therefore, it means that students are not making proper use of SNSs in such a way that they will benefit from it academically which may have a positive outcome in their educational pursuit. SNSs when used for academic purposes does not inhibit academic performance as founded out in Onasanya, et al (2013).

The result from research question 5. Show that limited internet facilities inadequate power supply, financial constraints, lack of technical skills, fear of privacy invasion and poor knowledge of the educational use of SNSs are some major obstacles that hinder the use of SNS among students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made; University Administrators should take center stage in promoting the educational use of social networking sites within the

institution with the confidence of both their effectiveness and safety.

Parents and guardians have a responsibility to monitor and know what their wards are doing on the internet with the aim of guarding and advising them appropriately as a charity they say begins at home.

Curriculum planners should devise a methodology of officially incorporate the use of social networking sites in the learning processes of the Universities and other institutions have this will encourage the students to use SNSs positively in such a manner that will benefit their academic pursuit.

The government should make concerted efforts to ensure there is the availability of high-speed internet connectivity and steady electricity supply within the University environment, as this will go a long way to enhance academic activities among youths and prevent them from engaging in other social vices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study was designed to investigate the role of Social Networking Sites in enhancing the learning of economics in the Universities in Gombe state. The problem of this study based on the findings is that student is yet to fully tap from the educational benefits of using social networking sites. The researchers then conclude that there is need to meet up with the global changes and to make education more enjoyable, social and more global through networking by training more technicians that will help to alleviate some of the SNSs problems. There should be more training on how to use SNSs for educational purposes thereby develop students' knowledge and understanding of the abstract phenomenon in Economics



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