



Use Of Social Media for Enhancement of Students’ Learning Competence in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Prof. Innime Righteous¹, Dr. Gift Ugwe Roman²

¹Chancellor: Poise University, Rwanda. Orchid ID: 000-0002-0909-6024

²Department of Business Management, Poise University, Rwanda

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*Corresponding Author:

Prof. Innime Righteous

Abstract

The paper examined use of social media for the enhancement of students’ learning competence in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The study adopted the desk-study approach by using literature from internet, textbooks, interactions and other academic materials. The paper conceptualized peer influence, reader service and research as indicators of social media. The paper advocated the need for teaching staff to harness the latent potentials inherent in the use of social media by young learners to enhance teaching and learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The paper concluded that peer influence of social media, reader service provided by social media, and research tools of social media sites have the tendency to enhance students’ learning competence students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State and suggested among others that tertiary institutions lecturers in Rivers State should take advantage of students’ social media addiction and explore online learning opportunities of the students.

Abstrait

Le document a examiné l'utilisation des médias sociaux pour l'amélioration des compétences d'apprentissage des étudiants dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur de l'État de Rivers. L'étude a adopté l'approche d'étude documentaire en utilisant la littérature d'Internet, des manuels, des interactions et d'autres documents académiques. L'article a conceptualisé l'influence des pairs, le service aux lecteurs et la recherche comme indicateurs des médias sociaux. Le document préconise la nécessité pour le personnel enseignant d'exploiter les potentiels latents inhérents à l'utilisation des médias sociaux par les jeunes apprenants pour améliorer l'enseignement et l'apprentissage dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur de l'État de Rivers. L'article a conclu que l'influence des médias sociaux par les pairs, le service de lecture fourni par les médias sociaux et les outils de recherche des sites de médias sociaux ont tendance à améliorer les compétences d'apprentissage des étudiants dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur de l'État de Rivers et a suggéré, entre autres, que les enseignants des établissements d'enseignement supérieur de Rivers L'État devrait tirer parti de la dépendance des étudiants aux médias sociaux et explorer les possibilités d'apprentissage en ligne des étudiants.

Mots-clés : Médias sociaux, Amélioration, Étudiants, Compétence d'apprentissage.

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Introduction

Nigeria has population of 60% more of the youths, are having worlds fastest growing Internet-using population and this is another instance of “Modi effects” in that now almost every industry in India is harnessing the power of social media. Individuals, academicians and professionals

associated with this field have also realised the possibility of using social media. Students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State are in the majority of young persons who are prone to using social media tools. The need for teaching staff to snap into the social media novelty to promote

teaching and learning appears a major gap in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Learning competence of students may be enhanced when teaching staff attach learning activities to social media activities. When a lecturer drops voice note on Whatsapp, makes a knowledge content post on Facebook and demands 'likes' from students, that way students are likely engaged in learning activity.

Most of the social media usage by users is still informal, either way to maintain relationships and interests. Despite this traditional understanding, such platforms have a lot of potential in terms of supporting and complementing the learning process. They offer opportunities for educators to share information, cultivate meaningful academic interactions and simultaneously support multiple modes of learning in formal and informal environments (Celep, Konakh & Kuyumeu, 2014). It provides the ability for individuals and interest-aligned groups to work together and share domain expertise efficiently. At the academic level, students are increasingly turning to social media as an enabler for collaboration, course-based organization, and project-based work. Additionally, these platforms serve as accessible lines of communication that connect educators with learners irrespective of time and space to foster study groups, research communities and learn from home initiatives while receiving/ disseminating relevant academic information. So, social media enriches both teaching effectiveness and professional development of teachers by improving communication dynamics, enhancing participative learning and assisting collaborative approach to education. Celep et al.'s empirical results (2014) also demonstrate that knowledge sharing and interaction with educational content, such as multimedia resources, represent their foremost use.

Concurrently, colleges and universities are recognizing the need for a strong digital presence as a strategic necessity. Socio-varsity conducted Analytical Studies of Indian universities social media engagement through the creation of a Social IQ index using Qualitative and Quantitative methodologies. The results reflect that a staggering 86% of Indian users use social media, with the largest concentration (39%) in the 25–34 age group. Facebook was the most used platform, followed by Google+, Twitter and LinkedIn. It has become an integral component of academic communication in its own right, and the bonds formed through or within a classroom continue to play out on social media inside (and outside) the classroom even today (Pearson, 2010; Seaman & Tinti-Kane, 2013). As a result, the expectation is for modern-day educators to develop specialized skills that help them use these technologies in ways that are constructive and educationally beneficial. This trend is reflected in the increasing incidence of teachers active on a range of

platforms and their use of various digital tools for professional growth and communal knowledge sharing.

Abundant educational platforms, tools and the diverse range of pedagogical strategies continue to expand but selecting a suitable one for social media approach in education still remains a convoluted task. Such complexity makes continuous development and refinement of educators' competencies related to using digital and social media necessary. Mastery in this area involves more than just teaching benefits; it is also crucial to overall work efficacy and career advancement. And while the use of social media in pedagogy has been thoroughly investigated, there still lacks an empirical understanding of what specific skills need to be developed for educators to effectively incorporate these technologies into their teaching practices. The present study aims to identify and test the social media knowledge, skill, and attitudinal competences which underpin teaching effectiveness as it relates to performance outcomes. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) has been used as the primary analytical tool to fulfill this goal, and results and their implications are presented in detail in the discussions section of the paper.

The transformative impact of digitalization and social media on education in modern times has been widely discussed in the scholarly circles. There is a large literature indicating that these platforms have strong pedagogical benefits, such as fostering collaborative learning environments, providing networking opportunities and creating cognitively enriching educational landscapes (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007; 2008; 2010). In addition, social media has been found to enhance engagement in several dimensions: student-to-student interaction, teacher-student discussion, and content connection (Junco, Heiberger & Loken 2011; Blaschke, Porto & Kurtz 2010). Besides nurturing engagement, they also aid in the acquisition of higher-order thinking skills — including critical, creative and analytical abilities. Moreover, social media facilitates learner autonomy by allowing individuals to have increased control over their learning processes, thus encouraging independent learning and self-regulated knowledge acquisition (Nweke, 2018).

So many students in our tertiary institutions of higher learning find it difficult to cope with the modern trend in the learning world of school. The dearth or shortage of e-learning and internet facilities in institutions of higher learning have been attributed to be responsible for this. This study is therefore to investigate the learning competence of students in using social media tools. It shows concern on the readiness of lecturers to cope with the digital age. Learning engagement using the social media tools, the peer influence or grouping in social

media, the knowledge ingredients of social media, the reader services provided by social media.

Conceptual Clarification

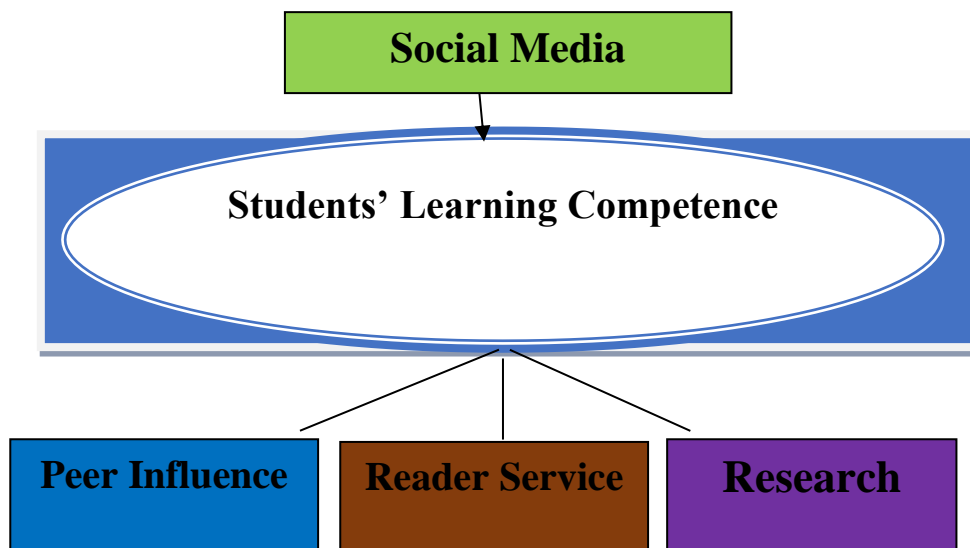


Fig. 1: Researcher's Guide, 2022

Literature Review

Concept of Social Media and Students' Learning Competence

The word social media represent away in which technology is used to build a program that bring two or more persons together for the purpose of interactive platforms where individuals with similar thought communicate more faster and easier with their environment and community share similar ideas, relates, and discuss with general knowledge acquired (Kietzmann, 2012). Social media as a spoken expression used a lot globally. It is only provide one with information as it interact with you while providing you with the information needed. It is a set of internet based applications that gives the chance for building of identity and also exchange of media users generate content.

Social media is a means of interaction where people build, view, communicate within themselves in different platform. Andreas and Michael (2010) are with the thought that social media is a based group of application that is develop with ideological structure which gives the exchange and creation of those that uses it through generating learning guide. It has become one of the channel of learning like Zoom, Facebook, etc.

According to Nielsen (2012), individuals continually waste too much time on social media than any other platform, this is adversely affecting their academic performance.

Amongst secondary school students social media platforms are used for pictures, music, e-mail, etc. rather than channeling it towards acquiring better knowledge and quality information that has been provided for their good.

Research Tools

It is a device that connect other site to help web users to design public profile where each website will form a web for its users to be able to network their ideas based on whatever they intend to achieve. It is a form of web design that help to link two or more persons together like classroom teaching and meeting purposes. It is a platform that is limited on chatting and other online meeting space.

Ellison and Boyd (2007) see's it as a web-based services that will expose people to the building of their profiles, display their own connections within the list of connected platform of network site. It is an online service or platforms dealing on facilitating social network among users who share interest, activities and background on life connection in interrelation to learning. It is a site where its users are allowed to share information around a selected group like classroom (Zoom). It's the best part of staying in connection with other users and a comfortable part of sharing photos from trips (Awake, 2012). It is made up of a representation of each user (Teacher/Student), the links and several needed web site that attach to learning.

A mobile is a device used with other devices as provided by newest technology. Is a device created in this 21st century and can be used as a tool for research. Presently, the reason for its establishment have been abused by children of today whereby a device one can use for learning purpose is now for pleasure and enjoyment. We have the highest rate of media abuse by our kids all because parent have failed to monitor what their kid's use devices provided to do. Kaplan (2002), divided the use of mobile phone into four different ways:

- It is the messages that comes along pertinence.
- It is time saving.
- It is location sensitive.

- It is reading purpose.

Peer Influence

Students tend to form a team among themselves based on proximity or shared interest and develop study skills, and it is through these proximal networks that children can influence their fellow classmates to excel academically. It is very possible that peer group can influence positively or negatively.

Students form groups at all times within themselves which most times shown cast while in school. Peers in their learning environment most times review some vital information that will be of help to each which most times influences their learning. Most times, these children involved themselves in some act of immoral behaviours which they basically take home. However, parents have big role in order to help school management to address this peer attitude which has affected them academically.

Social networking sites mostly impact students in a way of using email and messages. It has created a privilege for students where good communication and unionism is built for better performance. Teachers have benefited from its use in many fields having look at investigating the benefits of social network site towards learning, looking at how such may help to play on issues of identity, privacy, socialization, youth cultural and student awareness. Social site networking help students to be more exposed to social lives basically on online interactions with fellow peers which has helped them more academically.

In 2011, HCL had a study showing how 50% of British working staffs have been stopped from using social site during work hours because of its high level of distraction. So, as you are chatting, the title of the message will reveal more of the individual. Kim in conclusion: “if you are mindful of what you are doing, you can maintain a measure of privacy on a social network” (Awake, 2012);

One of the ironies of the internet is that it separates you from ‘the most important things’.” So it’s a great way to keep in contact with people but you just have to know when to get off. In Raquel’s judgment, “it seems that people lose their mind when they go to a social network” (Awake 2012).

Reader Service

In Boyd and Ellison (2007) study on “Why Youth Heart, Social Networking Site: the role of networked publics in teenage life?” Distribute lot of technical characteristics which allow one design a site platform, a clear type of the users that have link looking at the inside connection around the site system. Boyd and Ellison in Sunden’s (2003) explanation some particular parts that one can type into creating profiles that are gotten from giving answers to questions by the teacher based on one’s interest, age and location. Others also have allowed some site users to put up their pictures and most times add up their media content by modifying looks of their individual platforms.

Seasons of network have an influencing way where learners involved themselves with technological skills by their teachers generally. For some times, Prensky (2001) the division that exist between native digital and immigrants digital is connected as an accurate relative representation of ways in which people at a particular age bracket are born. Teachers are expected to use this medium in their classroom functions in order to assist their students for the advancement of their lives. It is a platform where teachers are to make good use of in terms of teaching their students basically for those ones that found it challenging to learn while in class with their fellow peers.

It’s an opportunity whereby children are guided and protected through social used and it’s important to their academic progress. Brake (2010) ideas on the use of media showing its relevance among educationist and other academicians on the need to encourage people on the need to embrace the new age where media has help to reduce teaching work loads and other learning materials teachers use while in classroom. Recently, it was found that step-up shows 47% of adults use social site basically for teaching and learning purpose. Also, the use of site media while teaching and learning, has help to regulate and managed learning and teaching attitude of teachers and students on the need to equip themselves on the current train which happens to what has made learning and information sources more valuable. For instance, an environmental learning survey 2009 saw 37% of children using media’s and it will increase more as time goes on because what our child has become acquitted with today is the familiarity of media use (Len Hart, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr, 2010). It was review how it provides opportunities mostly within the education environment problems also.

It is known how student give much of their time on use of media than their studies and there is no way they can pass their examination when they can’t study. “Social media is a useful servant but a dangerous master” that will be “described as a two-edged sword”. As students you should at all time be informed on what they stand to gain when they channel their time on the good side of this platform. They should be able to understand reasons why the platform was design in order to be able to monster a better people in the society on which they found themselves. (Adapted from: <https://m.thenigeriavoice.com/news>).

Robinson (2008) said the use of new global Technologies can serve three main functions in ensuring quality delivery of lessons to enhance students academic competence in any level of teaching:

- To deliver all or part of the learning content to learners.
- To supplement and extend content provided in different form (e.g. print) and
- Provide a two-way channel of communication for exchange between teachers and students with their

peers for feedback or for learning problem-solving, advance, debate and support.

Information and Communication Technologies can be used in education the following ways (Robinson, 2000):

- To support conventional classroom work. The teacher could ask students to use Global facilities in school work.
- The computer can help in the design and development of learning materials. So much material can be downloaded from the Internet. Such material must however be adapted to suit the specified instructional objectives.
- Electronic teaching materials such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines, etc. can be exchanged through the use of technology.
- The virtual library “stocks” electronic versions of books, journals, etc. Through Global facilities, we can access, store, analyze information in electronic form.
- Global facilities are particularly useful in research as it gives access to a world of resources, especially in electronic form.
- Global facilities can play a key role in administration. Students’ data, personnel administration, purchasing and supplies, advertisement, etc, can be handled with ease using Global facilities.
- Independent study and individualized instruction are facilitated by the use of information and communication technologies.
- Global facilities make learning more vivid and engaging.
- Global facilities can assist the teacher in assessment and testing.

Impact of Social Media on Student’s Academic Performance

According to Sife (2007), the application of global technological facilities in education depends on teachers’ competency skills to sustain the effective use of such technologies. In addition to knowing technical aspects, educators need to have a sound knowledge of the multiple aspects surrounding these facilities — pedagogical, administrative, financial and social. Technological innovation adoption has also been shown to rely on strong administrative support (Mulira, 2004; Priscilla, 2008), with departmental heads seen as playing crucial roles in the creation of electronic instructional materials and facilitating the incorporation of computer-based aids into subject based teaching contexts. Empirical data additionally shows that the successful inclusion of social media into teaching–learning encounters is fundamentally dependent on the degree of

support provided by school leadership and, in particular, principals whose buy-in can either encourage or hinder technology adoptions amongst teachers.

Prior Studies: There is an ample amount of studies prior to this study that indicated the relation between administrative support and use/implementation of social media. In his analysis, Cameron (2006) identifies lack of administrative support as one of the most significant deterrents to innovation in Nigerian education. In the same vein, Sife (2007) states that inadequate administrative, technical and monetary support systems characterize limited computer utilization in instruction processes. Additionally, Hawkins (2002) observes that educational administrators often do not provide structural incentives and support mechanisms required for effective use of social media in classrooms. Even though educators might be using collaborative and constructivist models of teaching, the institutional support for fully integrating social media in pedagogical practices continues to falter due to social media failing to gain visibility as a powerful contributor to learning outcomes.

According to Kariuki, 2004 teachers construct combine computers into instructional practice when they perceive strong and consistent horizontal support extended from the school administration. Whether or not such support for technology use is available and at what level greatly impacts teachers to adopt social media and other types of technological tools into their classroom. While teachers who are encouraged and provided resources from the institution are motivated to use global technological facilities in their pedagogical activities, they whose institutions do not support them often show very little/mild interest or complete unwillingness towards technology usage. School administrators (principals, rectors) have a major mediating role in this process as they can create a supportive environment and encourage teachers to use digital tools by motivating, instructing, and helping them. Access to resources is not the only impact of their leadership, it also shapes the teachers attitude towards technology-enhanced instruction. Therefore, administrative commitment is pivotal in establishing structural conditions to foster effective technology integration. However, in comparison to the importance attached to administrative support for adoption of social media by polytechnics in northern Ghana implementation remains low and hence warrants further examination of how behind-the-scenes mechanisms such as administrative support will impact on carrying out these changes. Moreover, a major determinant for educators’ individual usage of digital tools and integration of social media into teaching–learning processes has been identified as technological support. According to Yang (2008), insufficient technical support is one of the biggest barriers; without reliable help from a technician in overcoming technical obstacles, computers in classrooms will not be used as much, if at all.

In support of this view, Afshari (2009) argues that institutional efforts are needed to strengthen teachers' ability to seamlessly integrate social media into the classroom. The focus of educational authorities to be centred on the procurement of credible technology infrastructure and strong systems towards maintaining establishments alongside monitoring facilities such that it helps usage for the execution. Incorporating responsive support structures and ongoing training for staff to address technical problems efficiently is all part of it. Toe (2008: 11) classifies inadequate technical support as one of the major barrier to growth and diffusion of digital technologies. This will increase their confidence in using technology, and therefore effective technical assistance can be provided. Additionally, Afshari (2009) points out that access to fundamental aspects of digital resources—including but certainly not limited to internet connectivity, school networks, and peripheral devices like projectors, scanners and multimedia equipment—will enhance teachers ability to facilitate their classrooms. But experienced users devour and often share expertise to support your peers and provide them with continuous scaffolding. In contrast, limited technical skills and knowledge on its maintenance remains a paradox among the teachers that hinders them from better integrating social media. Consequently, these pervading technical shortcomings pose a substantial barrier to the effective utilization of social media in classroom settings.

Scarcity of technical support is a major obstacle in the successful delivery of computer-based educational services. The extent of this technological navigation dilemma faced by educators was highlighted in an evaluation study that took Place three years into the computer integration program undertaken by Priscilla (2008) where participants frequently encountered technical issues of circumstantial nature regarding the pedagogical use of computers. These challenges threaten both teachers' confidence and their ability to thoughtfully integrate digital tools into broader instructional practices. Without dependable technical assistance to alleviate this burden, it leads to inefficiencies and interruptions in the education process.

Many empirical studies have shown how recurring mechanical failures, combined with delayed service, not only minimize effective learning time but are also a cause of teacher frustration. Educators who do not have instant access to technical support or have limited technical knowledge are more likely to experience operational problems when integrating social media and other related technologies into the classroom. As a result, it is hypothesized that strong technical and social media support is an important factor in teachers' adoption of and engagement with technology within higher education institutions. Educators not only need technical assistance, they also need pedagogical support, which can involve advice on choosing relevant digital tools and integrating these into lesson planning or aligning the use of applications to particular learning goals. So too, practical recommendations on classroom organization—especially in

resource-constrained environments—are important to make the most of limited technological infrastructure. It is also possible that the inherent nature, perceived incompatibility of technological innovations contribute to impediments to the adoption of innovative applications, which negatively impact social media implementation in polytechnics in northern Ghana.

Conclusion

Students are today more glued to their social media screens than books. From the reviewed literature, peer influence of social media, reader service provided by social media, and research tools of social media sites have the tendency to enhance students' learning competence students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Suggestions

Based on the opinions of the various authors reviewed in the paper, the following suggestions have been made:

1. Tertiary institutions lecturers in Rivers State should take advantage of students' social media addiction and explore online learning opportunities of the students.
2. The funds allocated to acquire the appropriate number of ICT tools in number and quality.
3. The management should provide internet facilities in practical or ICT related subjects.

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