

Internet Usage and Academic Performance of Students in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo

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Abstract: The study examined Internet usage and academic performance of students in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo. Two research questions and hypotheses guided that study. The correlational research design was adopted for the study and the population of the study consisted of 4,292 students in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo during the 2024/2025 academic session. The sample for the study was 385. A structured questionnaire titled Internet Usage and Academic Performance Questionnaire (IUAPQ) was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was subjected to a face validation and a reliability coefficient index of 0.84 was obtained using Alpha Cronbach statistics. Path analysis was used to answer the research question as well as to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between WhatsApp usage, Facebook usage and the academic performance of students in the University of Uyo. It was recommended among others that government should show commitment towards effective integration of Information and Communication Technology into the mainstream of the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Internet Usage Whatsapp Usage, Facebook Usage, Academic Performance

I. Introduction

The internet has become popular among youths considering the fact that internet sites allow people to stay connected with friends and family, make new friends, share pictures and exchange ideas. According to Ugwulebo and Okoro (2016) the internet is defined as a large computer network linking together millions of smaller computers at numerous sites in various countries belonging to thousands of business, government, research, educational and other organisations. Undiyaundeye (2014) has noted that internet engagement can offer adolescents deeper benefits that extend into their view of self, community and the world. Thus, engaging in various forms of social media is a routine activity that has shown to benefit children and adolescents by enhancing communication, social connection and even technical skills.

Today, the internet does not only serve social purposes, the internet provides huge platform for commerce and educational activities. According to Tayo, Adebola and Yahya (2019) internet platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, MySpace, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Google Plus help students and educators to access information and educational-related materials. Pardo (2013) averred that internet allows students to interact with one another, their teachers and communities that share in their education and related activities. Despite the advantages of internet utilization to students' academic performance, Karim, Zamzuri and Nor cited in Soegoto and Tjokroadiponto (2018) noted that the widespread use of the Internet and the convenient mechanism it provides, such as easy access, easy downloads, and easy copy and paste functions have made many types of unethical behaviours easier, particularly those involving students in academic settings. Among the issues in ethics within the academic environment that can be triggered by the Internet are fraudulence, plagiarism, falsification, delinquency, unauthorized help, and facility misuse.

Whatsapp, one of the internet platforms is a mobile application used for instant messaging purposes to replace the normal phone short messages (SMS) because of its capacity to send large volume of messages and media files unlike the SMS. Eberechukwu and Nwaizugbu (2018) reported that Whatsapp came into existence in the year 2009 and has become the most popular social media applications used by mostly the young people for communication (Fawzi, 2015). There are many literatures that highlight the impact of Whatsapp in teaching/learning. For instance, Etim, Idongesit and Ema (2016) revealed a significant influence of WhatsApp module utilization on geography students' academic performance. Also, Izyani and Mohamed (2016) noted that WhatsApp utilization is important since it enhances students' proficiency in the use of English language and help them learn the language better. Kumar, Lian and Vasudevan (2016) found that using whatsapp both within and out of classroom environment improved the learning performance of students since students can use it anywhere- anytime.

Internet usage of students also involves the use of Facebook. Although Ahmed (2010) observed that Facebook cannot be considered merely a tool to entertain, amuse and communicate with friends, but can be considered an effective learning tool if properly functioned and used. Karpinski and Duberstein (2009) are of the opinion that, Facebook users had significantly lower GPAs than non-users (3.0-3.5 versus 3.5-4.0). They also found that Facebook users spent significantly less time studying weekly than non-users (1-5 hours versus 11-15 hours) which influence their academic performance negatively.

According to Frommer (2010) Instagram is an internet, photo-sharing, video sharing and social networking services that allow users to take pictures and videos and share them on the internet in their social media platforms. Akram and Kumar (2017) noted

that Instagram as internet technology allows students to share educational thoughts with another. It helps students to release education information with other students to relate educational information with other students in other countries. Students can easily communicate or share information quickly with each other. The availability of smart phones to university students coupled with government plans on integration of ICT into the mainstream of the teaching and learning process, students' exposure to internet usage has increased profoundly. This issue therefore has triggered the need to examine how students' exposure to the internet has affected their academic performance. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between internet usage and students' academic performance in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo.

Statement of Problem

The use of internet provides students with the ability to get more useful information, to connect with learning groups and other educational systems that make education convenient. It also affords students and institutions with multiple opportunities to improve learning methods. However, frequent engagement in various internet platforms has turned most students into addicts which affect students' ability to manage time for academic activities. In this regard, Bawa and Suleiman (2017) reported that students become distracted from academic engagement when they spend much time on Instagram or Facebook checking his/her profile to have a hint on the number of "likes" and "comments" their latest post got from viewers. This off-task behaviour results in poor performance in examinations and assignments because of less academic commitments. Tayo, Adebola and Yahya (2019) also documented that some students have diverted internet usage towards non-educational, unethical and inappropriate actions and behaviours. This situation has resulted in the proliferation of cybercrime tendency, sexual harassment and other anti-social behaviours among University students. From the aforementioned problems the study attempts to examine the relationship between Internet usage and academic performance of students in Faculty of Education, University of Uyo.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine Internet usage and academic performance of students in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo. Specifically, the study examined:

- i) The relationship between WhatsApp usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo.
- ii) The relationship between Facebook usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

- i) What is the relationship WhatsApp usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo?
- ii) What is the relationship between Facebook usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study

- i) There is no significant relationship between WhatsApp usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo.
- ii) There is no significant relationship between Facebook usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo.

II. Research Methods

Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The design allowed the researcher to uncover the magnitude of the relationship between internet usage and academic performance of University of Uyo. The population of the study consisted of 4,292 students in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo during the 2024/2024 academic session. The sample for the study consisted 385 students were selected using simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample for the study. "Internet Usage and Academic Performance Questionnaire (IUAPQ) was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument had a four-point Likert scale of: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). A face validation method was adopted to establish the validity of the instrument. Path analysis was used to analysis data collected from the field at .05 level of significance.

III. Result and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between WhatsApp usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between WhatsApp usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo.

Table 1: Summary of Path analysis of relationship WhatsApp usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo

WhatsApp usage					
Model 1 Variables	β	SE	R	t	Sig
Constant	.795	.395		2.013	.046
Academic Performance	.939	.032	.908	29.177	.000

R2.825

Adj. R2.824

F 851.280

N = 385; SE = Standard Error; *P<0.05

Regression results from Table 1 revealed that the analysis yielded a path coefficient of .939, which shows that there is a high relationship between WhatsApp usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo. At the same time, WhatsApp usage independently predicted academic performance, $F(1, 383) = 851.280$, ($\beta = .939$; $t = 29.177$; $P < 0.05$).

Therefore, the first hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between WhatsApp usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo was rejected at 0.05 level of significance. This means that There is a significant relationship between WhatsApp usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between Facebook usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between Facebook usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo.

Table 2: Summary of Path analysis of relationship between Facebook usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo

Facebook usage					
Model 1 Variables	β	SE	R	t	p-value
Constant	4.270	.411		2.013	.001
Academic performance	.658	.034	.747	29.147	.000

R2.558

Adj. R2.557

F 376.77

N = 385; SE = Standard Error; *P<0.05

Results from Table 2 revealed that the analysis yielded a path coefficient of .658 which implies a moderate correlation between Facebook usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo

Therefore, the second hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between Facebook usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo was rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between Facebook usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo.

IV. Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between WhatsApp usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo. This implies that, the use of WhatsApp could facilitate academic performance among students. This finding aligns with Barhoumi (2015) who found that WhatsApp facilitates online collaboration and communication and promotes students' school performance. Johnson and George, (2014) averred that WhatsApp provide access to learning material anywhere, anytime, and in various formats has potential to enhance deep student learning capabilities.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between Facebook usage and the academic performance of students in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo. This finding is supported by Ahmed (2010) further observed that facebook provide students with flexibility in obtaining and sharing educational information. Through feeds and pages Facebook provides students with real time educational experiences which may have significant influence on students' academic performance.

V. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram usage are significant internet platforms that facilitate academic performance of students in public the faculty of Education, University of Uyo.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

- i) Government should show commitment towards effective integration of Information and Communication Technology into the mainstream of the teaching and learning process.
- ii) Students' exposure to internet should be moderated to ensure that they are using useful educational contents that would facilitate their academic performance.
- iii) Students should be flexible in the quality of time in the internet. This would help them in avoiding addictive tendency towards internet usage.

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