SOCIAL MEDIA PREFERENCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR STUDENTS IN THE STATE COLLEGE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR

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ABSTRACT

Social media are contemporary computer-based learning tools which offer applicable up to date knowledge and skills whenever needed. This contributes beneficial or detrimental to academics depending upon students' plight. Nowadays, students are engrossed in social media using different digital devices and search engines. Accessing social media becomes inseparable to the lives of college students. This study is to ascertain the influence of social media to the academic performance of senior college students in the state college of Zamboanga del Sur. A pilot tested structured checklist was used as a tool for gathering the necessary data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data treatment. The results show that majority of the respondents were on the high level of academic performance, preferred Facebook and Google search engineusing their cell phones in doing net visits. They were highly and considerably engaged in networking activities like communicating family members and old and new friends, searching reliable information for academic purposes,and having fun or entertainment. There is a high positive correlation on the impact of social media to senior students' academic performance. Thus, technology integration in the academic activities gears towards holistic development of students.

Keywords: Academic performance, search engines, social media, social network

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Introduction

The advent of social media brings tremendous change to the lives of the people. It has been used by various users such as academicians, political experts, scientists, organization of corporate, students, and others. Bruner (1997), as cited by Loan (2011), asserted that the new generation embraces social media very quickly and that the people of different age levels and professions keep up to cope the demands of times. Cohen (2011), as cited by Moncrief et al. (2015), defines social media as digital content and networking interactions that are developed and maintained by people. It is either beneficial or detrimental yet inseparable and increasingly integrated in the daily lives of the people (Hakoama & Hakoyama, 2011). Because it has widespread implications particularly in the areas of education, communications, and economics (Chen & Bryer, 2012; Anderson& Rainie, 2012), doing away from this trend is inevitable since student clientele is foremost the reason of establishment (Piotrowski, 2015). Therefore, students can plausibly function well in online group learning with less or no anxiety of needing to raise questions before peers at school (Wheeler et al., 2008).

In this information age, social media seem to be growing rapidly especially on young adults (Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert, 2008). By nature, it has contagious, influential, and unstoppable power on audience (Osahenye, 2012). Connoly (2011), Zwart, M., Lindsay, D., Henderson, M., and Phillips, M. (2011)enumerated general benefits of social media which include encouraging greater social interaction via electronic mediums, providing greater access to information and information sources, encouraging creativity among and between individuals and groups, creating a sense of belonging among users of common social media tools, providing more choices to promote engagement among different individuals and groups, reducing barriers to group interaction and communications such as distance and social/economic status, and increasing technological competency levels of frequent users of social media. In effect, Ahmed (2012) posited that the Millineal Generation, also known Generation Y, with their increased usage and familiarity with new communication technologies such as mobile data and the internet, social media augment possibility to enhance students contact and improve their participation in class.

This study is primarily anchored on Blumler and Katz's uses and gratification theory (1974). This theory suggests that media users engage social media in accomplishing something

valuable to satisfy their needs. Since their needs and degree vary, the choices as to what platforms, digital devices and search engines used, networking activities, and reasons of preferences are varying too. As such, this study generally aimed to ascertain the effect of social media on academic performance of the senior students in the state college in Zamboanga del Sur. Specific objectives were to determine the following: the social media platforms preferred by the respondents; digital devices and search engines used; the social networking activities in terms of extent of time spent; reasons or purposes of net visits; and, the level of academic performance.

Research Methodology

This study used descriptive-correlation design aided with a questionnaire checklist for the respondents. It usually makes some type of comparison, contrast, and correlation and sometimes, in carefully planned and orchestrated descriptive researches, cause-effect relationships may be established to some extent (Rodua & Santos, 1998). This method provided vital information on social media variables influencing academic performance of the senior students of the J. H. Cerilles State College, Mati, San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur which is composed of four colleges namely College of Teacher Education (CTE), College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), College of Fisheries, Forestry, and Environmental Studies (CAFES), and College of Engineering and Technology (CET). It has a number of not more than 1,300 students including the high school department.

Two sampling methods were considered upon the selection of respondents in the study. Random sampling technique was first employed in selecting 35 respondents to undergo the pilot test of the self-made checklist. Through SPSS, the Cronbach alpha result (0.9) was made the instrument valid and reliable. The validated checklist was administered to the 100 respondents in random. Grade Point Average (GPA) was evaluatedusing the college grading system.

Figure 1. Map of the locale.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Social media platforms accessed by the respondents.

Variable	STE	SAS	SAFFES	SET	P-value
Blogs	1.63	2.50	1.91	1.64	0.20
Facebook	3.40	3.17	3.17	3.05	0.04
Twitter	1.53	1.67	1.58	1.62	0.22
MySpace	1.37	1.67	2.00	1.49	0.26
LinkedIn	1.33	1.33	1.58	1.69	0.28
Youtube	2.91	2.83	3.33	2.79	0.06
Instagram	1.70	1.83	2.67	1.97	0.19
Gmail	2.14	1.83	2.75	2.41	0.12
Yahoomail	2.28	2.00	2.83	2.56	0.11
Aggregated mean	**2.03**	**2.09**	**2.42**	**2.14**	
Standard deviation	**0.72**	**0.61**	**0.67**	**0.58**	
Adjectival equivalent	**Seldom**	**Seldom**	**Seldom**	**Seldom**	

Legend:　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**Significant at P < 0.05**

Numerical Scale	Adjectival Equivalent
4 – (3.26-4.00)	4 – Always (A)
3 – (2.51-3.25)	3 – Sometimes (So)
2 – (1.76-2.50)	2 – Seldom (Se)
1 – (1.00-1.75)	1 – Not at all (N)

Table 1 shows that the four collegesrevealed to have a seldom (2.17) access on social media platforms. Despite slim usage, majority (90%) of the respondents accessed Facebook (P = 0.04), thus significantly considered to be the only platform in doing valuable networking activities. This finding concurred with the research studies of Ezumah (2013), Asemah et. al (2013), and Sponcil and Gitimu (2012) who found out that most respondents favored Facebook in which they preferred the site because it could easily access social interaction or updates such as chatting with family members, professors, and friends. This serves as entertainment purposes (Ndaku, 2013; Sofela, 2012)and better improves academic performance (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013; Gupta et al., 2013). The social media they had in different channels could give them the way to explore themselves other than reading print.The finding asserts that there is a potential vulnerability on the students to augment school's performance or deviate focus attention on net visitswhile they were in the school that could leadacademic activities neglected and left to suffer (Matthew, 2015). Thus, teachers are encouraged to integrate educational activities which would

alter such risks and to instill to the students the importance of using social media for their betterment especially on their academic studies.

Table 2. Digital devices used by the respondents.

Variable	STE	SAS	SAFFES	SET	P-value
Desktop (computer)	3.05	2.50	2.83	3.18	0.05
Cellphone	3.77	4.00	3.67	3.51	0.03
Tablet or e-reader	2.23	2.67	2.58	2.28	0.11
Aggregated mean	**3.02**	**3.06**	**3.03**	**2.99**	
Standard deviation	**0.77**	**0.82**	**0.57**	**0.64**	
Adjectival equivalent	**Sometimes**	**Sometimes**	**Sometimes**	**Sometimes**	

Legend: Significant at P < 0.05

Numerical Scale   Adjectival Equivalent
4 – (3.26-4.00)   4 – Always (A)
3 – (2.51-3.25)   3 – Sometimes (So)
2 – (1.76-2.50)   2 – Seldom (Se)
1 – (1.00-1.75)   1 – Not at all (N)

Table 2 shows that the four collegeswere sometimes (3.02) considering personal computers and cell phones to access different websites. However, majority (77%) of them always used cell phones among other devices. This runs parallel on the National Board Association survey and studies of Bannon (2012) and Aleman (2014) who noted that majority of the respondents used cell phones to browse the net and devoted to it for social media use. Being adaptable because of its built-in features and portability to the users, it is not surprising therefore that widespread use would take place. They visited their preferred sites through these devices which gave them instant and around the clock to varied applications (El- Hussein, M.O.M. & J.C. Cronjie, 2010), web functions, networking activities, and frequently used this even in any setting (Aleman, 2014)and most especially for social networking, surfing the internet, watching videos, and playing games (Lepp et al., 2015). Since highly engaging activities were offered upon using the gadgets especially with internet connection through WIFI or mobile data, it could tempt them to surf even in class hours, studying, and doing homework (Junco & Cotton, 2012) which would result to positively trigger or defer academic performance. This findingsuggests that teachers must educate students on how and when to use the gadgets in order not to disturb students' academic activities.

Table 3 shows that the four colleges were seldomlyvisiting (2.45) the net. However, majority (77%) of the respondents favored Google search engine to be accessed by the

respondents. This implies that media users consider such search engine as the most useful tool to search relevant documents or information because it is easy to use and has mastered the art of getting destination as quickly as possible with many occurring right pages than other search engines (ComScore, 2013; Hitwise, 2008; Neilsen, 2008). This means that they were more convenient to use the program for many considerable reasons. Thus, this finding suggests further researches for additional factors or variables why the search engine was mostly preferred and what additional total benefits it gives to the users.

Table 3. Search engines access by the respondents.

Variable	STE	SAS	SAFFES	SET	P-value
Ask.com	2.63	2.17	2.33	2.64	0.08
Bing	2.23	1.50	1.83	2.23	0.11
Google	3.70	3.17	3.50	3.44	0.03
GoogleScholar	2.53	2.17	2.17	1.72	0.09
MSN	1.84	1.67	2.00	1.64	0.16
Yahoo.com	2.86	2.67	3.08	2.97	0.06
Aggregated mean	**2.63**	**2.23**	**2.49**	**2.44**	
Standard deviation	**0.63**	**0.62**	**0.66**	**0.71**	
Adjectival equivalent	**Sometimes**	**Seldom**	**Seldom**	**Seldom**	

Legend: **Significant at P < 0.05**

Numerical Scale	Adjectival Equivalent
4 – (3.26-4.00)	4 – Always (A)
3 – (2.51-3.25)	3 – Sometimes (So)
2 – (1.76-2.50)	2 – Seldom (Se)
1 – (1.00-1.75)	1 – Not at all (N)

Table 4 shows that four collegeswere sometimes (2.99) doing net visits. However, they considered important factors in doing such networking activity. Among the most common activities were social and education related factors such as interacting or meeting family members, friends, and new people, having entertainment, sharing games, pictures, and streaming videos, promoting important ideas, and doing school or homework. This is in consonance to the study of Ndaku (2013) stressed that students used social media for entertainment, educational purpose, and information seeking. They used social media because they believe it can influence their academic performance (Sofela, 2012). Thus, the findings conform to the studies of Paul et al. (2012) and Mooze (2012) that the higher the intensity usage of the students on social media raises academic performance. Therefore, teachers can provide learning environment for students for them to focus more on academics than social pleasure.

Table 4. Networking activities done by the respondents.

Variable	STE	SAS	SAFFES	SET	P-value
Interacting or meeting new people	3.16	3.00	3.25	2.69	0.05
Building contact with family and friends	3.56	3.67	3.58	3.08	0.04
Getting information on latest happenings	3.19	3.00	3.17	2.97	0.05
Having fun or entertainment	3.47	3.00	3.17	2.82	0.04
Doing schoolwork or homework	3.44	3.17	3.58	3.03	0.04
Promoting ideas	3.07	2.83	3.17	2.67	0.05
Sharing games, pictures, and videos	3.09	2.16	3.08	2.56	0.05
Establishing business linkages	2.21	1.83	3.00	2.03	0.11
Aggregated mean	**3.15**	**2.83**	**3.26**	**2.73**	
Standard deviation	**0.42**	**0.58**	**0.22**	**0.34**	
Adjectival equivalent	**Sometimes**	**Sometimes**	**Always**	**Sometimes**	

Legend: Significant at P < 0.05

Numerical Scale
4 – (3.26-4.00)
3 – (2.51-3.25)
2 – (1.76-2.50)
1 – (1.00-1.75)

Adjectival Equivalent
4 – Always (A)
3 – Sometimes (So)
2 – Seldom (Se)
1 – Not at all (N)

Table 5 reveals that respondents (90%) of them were frequent users of social media. Hence, several (88%) of them put great extent on important reasons to satisfy their needs. They used it in remarkable extent (4.01) considering education and communication reasons such as interacting new people as well as to family members and friends, searching information on latest happenings and updates, promoting ideas for social and academic purposes, sharing games, applications, streaming videos, and having fun or entertainment. This result is in consonance to the studies of Sponcil and Gitimu (2014) which revealed most respondents visited networking sites to communicate family, peers, friends, and others, and Kasthuripriya et al. (2014) disclosing social network as helpful in getting guidance and information related to their interests in which has been used for entertainment, networking, and academics. Moreover, Nielson (2012) found that greater number of internet users seek information for education purpose especially in doing their school or homework. This signifies that respondents thought what were beneficial to them

during the surf. Therefore, teachers must adhere certain measures to make students highly engaging on education related activities upon using social media.

Table 5. Purposes of preference of social media by the respondents.

Variable	STE	SAS	SAFFES	SET	P-value
Interacting or meeting new people	4.23	3.83	4.50	3.72	0.02
Building contact with family and friends	4.40	4.33	4.42	3.74	0.02
Getting information on latest happenings	4.26	4.50	4.67	3.95	0.02
Having fun or entertainment	4.26	4.00	4.25	3.67	0.03
Doing schoolwork or homework	4.17	4.33	4.42	3.87	0.03
Promoting ideas	4.09	4.00	4.33	3.26	0.03
Sharing games, pictures, and videos	4.02	3.83	3.92	3.46	0.03
Establishing business linkages	3.19	3.83	4.00	3.08	0.06
Aggregated mean	**4.08**	**4.08**	**4.31**	**3.59**	
Standard deviation	**0.38**	**0.27**	**0.25**	**0.30**	
Adjectival equivalent	**Great Extent**	**Great Extent**	**Very Great Extent**	**Great Extent**	

Legend: **Significant at P < 0.05**

Numerical Scale	Adjectival Equivalent
5 – (4.21-5.00)	5 – Very Great Extent (VGE)
4 – (3.41-4.20)	4 – Great Extent (GE)
3 – (2.61-3.40)	3 – High Extent (HE)
2 – (1.81-2.60)	2 – Moderate Extent (Se)
1 – (1.00-1.80)	1 – Low Extent (N)

Table 6. Level of academic performance of the respondents.

	Frequency (%)			
Variable	STE (n = 43)	SAS (n = 6)	SAFFES (n = 12)	SET (n = 39)
Very High	2.50	16.50	8	0
High	95	16.50	17	44
Average	2.50	67	75	46
Low	0	0	0	10
Mean (%)	**89.60**	**86.00**	**84.64**	**85.72**
Standard deviation	**1.53**	**4.56**	**3.88**	**3.61**
Adjectival Equivalent	**High**	**Average**	**Average**	**Average**

Legend:

Numerical Scale	Adjectival Equivalent
4 – (93.26-100.00)	4 – Very High (VH)
3 – (86.51-93.25)	3 – High (H)
2 – (79.76-86.50)	2 – Average (A)

1 – (73.00-79.75)   1 – Low (L)

Table 6 shows that the three colleges were on the average level of academic performance (86.50%) where 62% of the respondents were on the high level, 35% were average, and 3% were very high. However, CTE students performed better among the three. In terms of general performance, the state college was on the average level (86.49%) yet almost on the higher level. Thus,they were influenced by significant factors which variedly contributed good performance. This result connotes additional variables for future researches in order to determine influential or detrimental factors concerning ascending or decreasing values of GPA of each student.

The social media platforms (0.804), digital devices (0.798), search engines (0.791), networking activities (0.859), and reasons of preference (0.829) all contributed highly significant to academic performance of the college respondents. Though respondents did slim visit to the social media sites using their personal computers and cellphones, their considerations on networking activities and reasons to surfing were additive factors to establish good learning. This is believed to be attributed by peer sharing of ideas using their communication devices through online. According to the National School Board Association, 60% of the students talked about educational topics online and more than 50% talked about school work through smartphones. This clearly shows that social media markedly improves academic performance of the respondents because it provides positive inputs for the students' studies and study materials and ideas available for them on the social media (Greg et al., 2013). Therefore, considerable factors such as the platforms, devices and search engines used, networking activities, and purposes of preference are influential to educational interest of the students.

In general, the study reveals that there is high correlation (0.869) between social media preference and academic performance of the respondents which denotes positive inputs towards advanced technology. As Sofela (2012) asserted, many students believed that social media could contribute good academic performance. With their interaction in family members, peers, friends, teachers or professors, and different channels, students were given all the chance to explore various web functions in satisfying their needs (Tamayo & Dela Cruz, 2014; Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013; Guthrie & Carlin, 2004).This implies that the more they cling on the social media, the greater the chance to enhance total or holistic learning.

Conclusions

Ninety percent (90%) of the senior students in J. H. Cerilles State College were frequent users of social media. Several (90%) of them accessed Facebook because it gives them easy access on social activities. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of them used cellphones to visit favorite websites because of its portability and utility value while the same rate posted Google as a favorite search engine to seek viable information related to family and world updates. Among the most common networking activities were social and education related variables such as interacting or meeting family members, friends, and new people, having entertainment, sharing games, pictures, and streaming videos, promoting important ideas, and doing school or homework. Respondents were on the average level (86.49%) as overall performance. Thus, all social media factors which include media platforms, devices and search engines used, networking activities, and purposes of preference positively and highly influenced academic performance. Generally, the study found that high intensity of social media preference significantly and highly correlated with better student academic performance.

Recommendations

Administration should upgrade network services in the whole JHCSC system for students and teachers' academic access. Thereby, they should draft proactive educational policies to deter inappropriate behaviors in web, to avoid setbacks in their academic activities, and to integrate the social media technology to support classroom instruction for collaborative experiential learning. Likewise, proper use of social media should be observed to avoid setbacks in their academic activities. Further studies should be conducted especially on the reasons of high preference of Google as a search engine as well as additional related variables concerning better performance of the students.

Acknowledgment

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