

**EXTENT OF UTILIZATION OF FACEBOOK FOR ENHANCING ACADEMIC
LEARNING BY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS
IN ANAMBRA STATE**

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Abstract

The study determined the extent of utilization of Facebook by business education students for enhancing academic learning in Anambra State. One research question guided the study and one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted and the population of 3302018/2019 final year business education students in the four public tertiary institutions was studied without sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire containing 7 items and validated by experts in the field of business education and measurement and evaluation. Pilot testing was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and data analysis with Cronbach Alpha yielded coefficient of 0.86. Three hundred and twenty (320) duly completed copies of the instrument were retrieved and used for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question and determined the homogeneity of the respondents' ratings while the t-test was used to test the hypothesis. Findings revealed that Facebook is utilized by business education students at great extent for enhancing academic learning. Gender did not significantly influence respondents' mean ratings on the extent they utilize Facebook for enhancing academic learning. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that business education students recognize the importance of Facebook in enhancing their academic learning and therefore utilize it for academic purposes. It was therefore recommended among others that; Federal and State governments should provide free internet services to tertiary Institutions in Anambra State. This will motivate students to utilize Facebook in academic learning to a very great extent.

Keywords: Facebook, Academic Learning, Business Education, Business Education Students

Introduction

Since the advent of the internet, the Facebook has become the most popular used online social networking site across the world. Facebook has more than 21 million registered members and is creating about 1.6 billion page views everyday (Enang, 2014). Facebook is an aspect of social networking site that is built on the ideological and technological foundation of web 3.0. It has become a modern interactive channel through which individuals, groups and organizations connect one another, share ideas, experiences, and information of interest. Facebook has become a widespread tool for communication and exchange of ideas, helping individuals and organizations to reach a vast audience that could hitherto not be reached by traditional media.

The utilization of Facebook in the field of education has greatly impacted on the quality of teaching and learning globally. It is most popular among students. In September 2005, a high school version was launched by Facebook for the usage by college students. Facebook provides new opportunities for preparing learners for the 21st century. Vervaart (2014) stated that Facebook has increased students' participation in academic group discussion, sharing of homework, projects, team work and ideas. Similarly, Edegoh, Asemal and Ekanem (2013) posited that the use of Facebook in classrooms has facilitated students' delivery of homework and assignments. As stated by Abdullahi and Joshua (2014), social networking sites (Facebook inclusive) have the potential to support teaching and learning in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Abdullahi and Joshua stressed that SNSs provide learners with a chance to manipulate their learning environment and to participate actively in the learning process, thereby encouraging students' active engagement, collaboration and participation in class activities and group work. This implies that Facebook can provide a flow of information dissemination in a sophisticated method that yields measurable results.

Business education lecturers can utilize Facebook to improve their instructional process and enhance their collaborative professional development. They can utilize Facebook in sharing of classroom practices, knowledge sharing, posting conferences, workshops and training discussion. Facebook can help business education students in particular to share links, answer questions from the instructor and even post questions and comments to fellow students. This will help them meet the goals of education generally and that of business education in particular.

Business education can be defined as an aspect of vocational education programme that offers students relevant skills and competencies needed to be gainfully employed or rather, start up small businesses and succeed in them. According to Osuala (2009), it is the sum total of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for successful promotion and administering of business enterprise. Osuala stated that business education is expected to expose its recipients to diversity curricula, and inculcate in them attitudes, knowledge, skills, values required to become a healthy, literate, and self-reliant citizen. The teaching and learning in business education have evolved over the last two decades as a result of social networking

sites which ICT bequeaths to the field of education. There is now more emphasis on student-centered pedagogy. There is also an increased expectation placed on the role that social networking sites can play in students' learning.

In Nigeria, many students in the tertiary institutions (business education students inclusive) are believed to be utilizing Facebook for academic purposes. This is because, according to Zarrella and Zarrella (2011), Facebook has the potential of influencing students both within Nigeria and across international boundaries. Zarrella Zarrella posited that Facebook's emphasis on peer-to-peer interactions can enhance informal learning experiences. The authors averred that the greatest asset of Facebook in education is its capacity to enhance students' satisfaction and engagement in classroom activities. It can help business education students communicate more effectively with their fellow students, friends and family. Irwin, Ball and Desbrow(2012) reported that students view Facebook as a social media platform that facilitates their learning, by increasing interaction between students and instructors, and notifications for course information. However, it appears that Facebook is beginning to have negative impacts on students' learning and academic performance, as many students seem not to be controlling their absorption of Facebook, which affects their personality and study habits.

Similarly, despite the potentials of Facebook, it is quite unfortunate that many business education students are not able to cognitively control their absorption of Facebook which is affecting their study habits. In support of this view, David (2014) reported that many business education students utilize Facebook for non academic purposes which adversely affect their academic performance. In the same vein, Adebowale (2013) earlier lamented that students (Business education students inclusive) have their Facebook site constantly running in the background while they are carrying out their academic engagements. These create distractions and reduce the time for focusing on their studies. Facebook could be put to variety of uses depending on the gender of the users and the motive behind it. This means that the gender of the students could play a significant role on whether Facebook is utilized for academic purposes or not. Enang (2014) and Ajisafe (2014) reported that gender of students can influence their utilization of SNSs for learning. Therefore, this study was carried out to ascertain the extent Facebook is utilized for enhancing academic learning of business education students in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, educational visionaries and reformers have held high hopes for the use of technology to improve the quality of education. With the emergence of information and communication technology, Facebook is available for students to use in enhancing their learning. However, the researcher is worried that business education students seem not to be harnessing the enormous educational potentials of Facebook technology as they are constantly busy with their laptops and mobile phones taking pictures, chatting, updating profiles even when classes and lectures are on. Many students in tertiary institutions (including business education students) have abandoned the use of Facebook for academic learning in preference to chatting with friends even at lesson time. This takes much of

students' study time, distracts them from completing assignments, and resulting to their poor academic performance. Therefore, this study specifically ascertained the extent business education students in Anambra State utilize Facebook for enhancing academic learning.

Research Questions

The following research question guided this study:

1. To what extent do business education students utilize Facebook for enhancing academic learning in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

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

1. Male and female business education students do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent Facebook is utilized for enhancing their academic learning in Anambra State.

Review of Related Literature

Literature for the study was reviewed under utilization of Facebook for enhancing students' academic learning.

Utilization of Facebook for Enhancing Academic Learning

Facebook, as a social networking site was created in 2004 at Harvard University as a means to facilitate student interaction and communication via internet. In 2007, it was reported that Facebook have more than 21 million registered members and they are creating 1.6 billion page views everyday (Enang, 2014). The main purpose of creating Facebook was to move secure integration of its user into daily practices to media. Smith and Caruso (2010) indicated that Facebook is most popular among students and they are the strong factor for its success. This is perhaps the reason while in September 2005, a high school version was launched by Facebook for the usage by college students. In November 2006, communities for commercial organizations were introduced through Facebook. Facebook has maintained privacy of communities.

According to Smith and Caruso (2010), Facebook.com is the most popular among online social networking sites (SNSs). This website claims to have hundreds of millions of registered users. Research undertaken by the Educase Center for Applied Research (ECAR) showed that of the 90.4 percent of students in their sample population who interacted with social networking sites daily, 96.6 percent indicated using Facebook (Smith & Caruso, 2010). Smith and Caruso also found that Facebook use among students has increased in the past few years. In 2010, 97 percent of students surveyed reported using Facebook, up from 89 percent of respondents in 2008. Social communication (maintaining interpersonal relationships and social enhancement), information exchange, and entertainment value all appear to be significant motivations for Facebook users (Cheung, Chiu & Lee, 2010; Madge, Meek, Wellens & Hooley, 2009; Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert, 2009).

Educational and learning motivations are notably absent in this list; however, this does not mean that Facebook cannot be used for educational purposes. In fact, Facebook's popularity and students' expertise with the site make it an exciting potential educational tool. According to Facebook (2012), Facebook is a tool with the potential to influence students both within and across international boundaries. Facebook also represents an internationally accessible, engaging information-sharing mechanism that could encourage intercultural dialogue and critical thinking (Maher & Hoon, 2008). The popularity and ubiquity of Facebook has inspired numerous academic studies on the site's role in education (Goertler, 2009; Grosseck, Bran & Tiru, 2011; Mazman & Usluel, 2010) and its potential effects on classroom climate (Mazer, Murphy & Sidmonds, 2007). Facebook's emphasis on peer-to-peer interactions can enhance informal learning experience. Bosch (2009) stated that students can use Facebook effectively for academic purposes and activism. Students are not the only ones contemplating academic uses of Facebook; faculty can use it for course-related purposes (Junco, 2012).

Helou, Rahim and Oye (2012) listed the following reasons why student use Facebook:

- a) To get technical and vocational skills which are very important for human development.
- b) Socializing with friends.
- c) Doing a sort of collaborative study, research or academic work.
- d) Carrying out informal form of learning (that is online degree).
- e) Discovering and exploration of interests, both academic and future interest.
- f) Doing some kind of online marketing, business, seminar known as webinar.
- g) Getting news information about what going on around the country, within his or her vicinity, about friends and relatives.
- h) An avenue to bring the attention of the government to what is needed in their schools, or suggesting to the government how to improve the school infrastructure sine it will not be possible for students sometimes to go the office of whoever is in authority.

Despite the potentials of Facebook, it is quite unfortunate that many students are not able to cognitively control their absorption of Facebook and it is affecting their personality and study habits. Facebook has an adverse effect to the productivity of students and has been proven to decrease students' academic performance and their grades. Social networking is very hard to ignore sine there are constant distractions and new information been fed into the system. That is pictures being posted and status updates of friends. Many students are admitting Facebook is the cause of their grades suffering (Weeks, 2011).

Method Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The study was carried out in four public tertiary institutions that offer business education programmes in Anambra State. The population of this study consisted of 330 2018/2019 final year business education students in the four tertiary institutions chosen for this study and where business education programmes are offered. The respondents include 11 final year business education students from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam, 145 final year business education students from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, 68 final year business education students from Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe and 106 final year business education students from Federal College of Education.

A 7-item self-developed questionnaire titled "Utilization of Facebook for Enhancing Academic Learning by Business Education Students Questionnaire (USNSEAL-BBEQ)" was used for data collection. The face and content validity of the instrument was established using the opinions of two experts in the field of Business Education and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation Unit. The reliability of the instrument was established using pilot-test and data analyzed using Cronbach Alpha method yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.86. The researcher administered 330 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents with the help of four research assistants while 320 copies were returned and found usable. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity of the respondents' opinions. Each item was interpreted based on the real limit of the mean corresponding to each item category as follows: Very High Extent: 4.50 – 5.00, High Extent: 3.50 – 4.49, Moderate Extent: 2.50 – 3.49, Small Extent: 1.50 – 2.49 and Very Small Extent: 1.00 – 1.49. T-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. A hypothesis was rejected where the p-value is less than the alpha value but accepted where the p-value is greater or equal to the alpha value. All the analyses were done using SPSS version 23.

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent do business education students utilize Facebook for enhancing academic learning in Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent they utilize Facebook for enhancing academic learning

N = 320

S/N	Items on Facebook	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
To what extent:				
1	Do you share book reviews with Facebook	3.51	0.74	Great Extent
2	Do you search online project with Facebook	3.30	0.69	Moderate Extent
3	Do you use Facebook to enhance communication with lecturers and fellow students	4.59	0.35	Very Great Extent
4	Do you use Facebook to follow news feeds	4.57	1.05	Very Great Extent
5	Do you use Facebook to post assignments and lecture schedules	4.00	0.96	Great Extent
6	Do you use Facebook to elicit conversation via comments	3.89	0.87	Great Extent
7	Do you sue Facebook to share educational 4.33 resources		0.46	Great Extent
Grand Mean		4.02		Great Extent

Data in Table 1 show that items 3 and 4 are utilized by business education students for enhancing academic learning at a very great extent with mean scores ranged between 4.57 and 4.59. Items 1, 5, 6 and 7 are utilized at a great extent while the remaining one item (item 2) is utilized at a moderate extent. The grand mean score of 4.02 shows that on the whole, business education students in Anambra State utilize Facebook for enhancing academic learning at a great extent. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

Hypothesis 1

Male and female business education students do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent Facebook is utilized for enhancing their academic learning in Anambra State.

Table 2: summary of t-test analysis of significant difference between male and female respondents on the extent they utilize Facebook for enhancing academic learning

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
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Male	98	4.17	0.90		
	318	0.57	0.16	Accepted	
Female	222	4.19	0.89		

Data in Table 2 show that t-value of 0.57 at 318 degree of freedom with a p-value of 0.16 is greater than the criterion value of 0.05 ($0.16 > 0.05$). This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students on the extent they utilize Facebook for enhancing academic learning in Anambra State based on gender. Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that business education students in the area of the study utilize Facebook for enhancing their academic learning at great extent. The findings of the study concurred with that of Heiberger and Harper (2008) which found that the extent Facebook is utilized by students of tertiary institutions for enhancing learning is very high. This is so because, it is most likely that students are aware of the positive impact of Facebook social networking in encouraging virtual meeting with fellow students within and outside of the countries to share ideas relating to their course of study; improving their self-esteem and well being, research and learning; strengthening interpersonal relationship, read and write web skills among other benefits. In support, Karimi and Khodabandelou (2013) reported that Facebook is the most popularly utilized SNSs for academic purposes. This may be due to its low cost and positive impact on learning.

This further justified the application of uses of gratification theory to this study, as the finding proves that the Facebook give the students room for getting essential information and education; this is one of their reasons for using it. Students utilize Facebook mainly to share educational resources, enhance communication with lectures and fellow students, collaborative study, and research study. According to Grosbeck, Bran and Tiru (2011), the popularity and ubiquity of Facebook has inspired numerous academic studies on the site's role in education and its potential effects on classroom climate. Junco (2012) asserted that Facebook's emphasis on peer-to-peer interactions which enhances informal learning experience is the reason why higher education students utilize it for academic learning to a high extent.

Furthermore, the finding revealed that gender did not significantly influence the respondents' mean ratings on the extent they utilize Facebook for enhancing academic learning. This means that gender is not an important factor in the extent of utilization of Facebook in enhancing academic learning. This is in line with the findings of Singh and Kumar (2013) which revealed that male and female students did not differ significantly on the extent they utilized Facebook for academic purposes. In contrast, Enang (2014) and Asabere (2012) reported that male students utilize Facebook for knowledge acquisition more than their female counterparts.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, one can see that Facebook help in enhancing students' learning and academic performance and widen student's knowledge in business courses. Utilizing Facebook in teaching and learning will not only revolutionize instructional delivery, it will stimulate students' active involvement in their learning process, and the development of their innate scientific and critical thinking abilities. Based on the findings of this study, the researchers conclude that business education students in Anambra State tertiary institutions utilize Facebook to enhancing their academic learning.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Federal and State governments should provide free internet services to tertiary Institutions in Anambra State. This will motivate students to utilize Facebook in academic learning to a very great extent.
2. Business Education Departments and Authorities of tertiary institutions should continue to enlighten students through seminars and workshops on how to utilize Facebook for academic purposes to a very great extent.
3. Business education lecturers should utilize more Facebook in their teaching and academic interaction with students. This will make students to utilize the platform for academic purposes to a very great extent.

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