INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-NETWORKS ON CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

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Abstract

Technology has inevitably become the strongest tool in almost every aspect of human's daily life. It has a significant impact on education. This study is an effort to understand the possible influence this social networking has on Christian religious studies students in relation to their academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. Therefore, the study examined the influence of social networks on the academic performance of Christian religious studies students based on gender, student's level and student's location. This study adopted descriptive research method, and simple random sampling technique which was used to sample 100 Christian religious studies students as respondents for this study. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used for the instrument. Hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical instruments all at alpha level of 0.05. Findings of this study revealed that there were a significant influence of social networks on academic performance of Christian religious studies students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria based on gender, student's level and Student's location. Based on these findings, the study concluded that social networking has a significant influence on Christian religious studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. It was therefore, recommended that the school should fully implement this web based application in the school system for easy access in Christian religious studies to students

Keywords: Influence, Socio-Networks, Christian Religious Studies, University Students, Academic Performance.

Introduction

The improvements in communication technology in the world have broadened the scope of communication. Modern Technology in communication has turned the entire world into a Global Village; it helps people to be better informed, enlightened and to keep abreast with world development and exposes mankind to a better way of doing things. However, as information technology advanced so did social networks. Social networks are used to facilitate communication between students and instructors, and provide information about resources and links related to course materials. This could be done either traditionally or technologically because it allows students to follow announcements about classes, courses, departments and delivery of assignment by lecturers. Students can take part in collaborative learning by exchanging ideas, sharing information and working together based on interests and needs. Example of students' collaboration include participating in activities such as joining academic groups related to their schools, departments or classes and carrying on group works by sharing assignment, project and ideas (Amadi&Ewa, C.J (2018)

In recent years, the increasing proliferation and capabilities of socio-networks are positioning technology as a necessity, replacing personal interactions between humans with online interactions especially after 2020 where in an effort to curb the spread of the Covid19 pandemic. After the covid19 pandemic broke out in 2020, social- network is unarguably the primary connecting means for most students in the world especially areas still hit with variants of the covid19 virus where physical interactions were replaced with online interactions worldwide. In today's information world, access to information is essential more than before. The revolution of social networks is playing very important role in Social relationships, redefining how information is being accessed. It has changed the primary purpose of mobile devices from making or receiving calls to accessing the latest information on any subject matter any time anywhere even on the move. Aman (2020) is of the view that, new technology often necessitates a change in old practices. Students communicate; build relationships using social networks. The advancement in technology has made it easier for people especially the young people to have access to Internet and thus. Ibrahim (2018) adds, Social networking has revolutionized the way social interaction takes place. It is a process by which people socialize online. Through it, people seek and enjoy the companionship of others online and share information and services among individuals and groups having a common interest.

Eke (2014) Social networking, is a mobile technology with 'friendship in hand' hence, the process of finding friends and managing friendships through the Internet. He further explained that people who wish to meet others, put up their most compelling and attractive presentations through their profile pages. Although social networking can be established with friends, viz: universities, there are a number of social networking sites that focus on particular interests such as Twitter, Yahoo Messenger, Facebook, Whatsapp messenger, 2go messenger, Skype, Google talk, Zoom and Androids. Kuss and Griffiths (2019) described social networking sites as virtual communities where users can create public profiles; interact with real- life friends and meet other people based on shared interests. While to Arshin (2020) social networking sites as virtual places where people find themselves and share information.

Most of the young adults of university age have active profiles of social networking which constitute an integral part of daily communication and enhances learning opportunities. Users of social networking use it to communicate with other users about areas of mutual interest, whether from a personal, business or academic performance. A direct relationship exists between social networking usage and academics performance of students in the university. With so many social media sites displayed on the internet, students may sometimes be tempted to abandon their homework and reading times in preference to chatting with a friend. Many people are addicted to the online rave of the moment with Facebook, twitter among others (Adebayo 2015)

Today, some students use social networking sites as an important resource for education, some use social networking sites for fun while others are 24 hours online even in class room, and Lecture Theatres. There are many and different social networking sites, some of which will be briefly explained below; example Facebook, WhatsApp and Zoom. Facebook is a networking site launched on 4th February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. It has about 2.9 billion active users as of 1st February 2020.Users can create user profiles, pages and groups, add other

users, exchange messages, post status updates and photos, share videos, receive notification when others update their profile, and even advertise products.

WhatsApp is an internationally available freeware used for messaging and voice over ip service which was launched in January 2009 by Brian Action and Jan Koum. WhatsApp was later acquired by Facebook, now Metaverse, in 2014 for approximately $19.3 billion with active users rising to more than 2 billion by February of 2020. As long as one has data, WhatsApp offers personal and group voice and video calls, sending; voice messages, short videos, documents and pictures between users and within groups. It also has an end-to-end encryption, to ensure the security of communication between users.

Zoom is a proprietary video telephony software program developed by Zoom Video Communications and launched in 2011 but saw an explosion in usage since 2020 during the pandemic when an alternative to meeting through physical contact was sought. Zoom is used for video communications, video and audio conferencing, chat, and webinars across mobile, desktop, and room systems. Zoom Rooms are software-based conference rooms used in board, conference, huddle, and training rooms, as well as executive offices and classrooms.

With reference to the benefit of the above devices on the teaching and learning of students, Eke (2014), submitted that social network tools can facilitate students in setting up collaborative learning, as they place students at the core of the learning experience while at the same time allowing the teacher to function as the mentor and guide of knowledge construction and sharing. Pact (2019) also highlighted the fact that such tools provide authentic language education settings, an important consideration for achieving high communicative competence.

Ani (2015) discovered that out of the 20 social networks listed, students use social network for achieving specific academic purposes and increases technology proficiency and enhances research skills.

There are web pages, software and apps available in different languages in different versions for bible references, for instance, You Version. This software helps Christian Religious Studies' students enrich their research knowledge thereby enhancing development of skills through the vital information sourced from Social networks.

As regards negative influence of Social networks to the students of Christian Religious Studies' students, Amadi, &Ewa (2018) suggested that Social networks had become a major distraction to students, causing the overall performance of students to decline, especially the ones who tend to check their Facebook and twitter while studying. The students get used to short forms of writing and also become poor in grammar usage and spelling. Social networks have affected some students in their use of English and words examples are words like you for u, your for ur, Christmas as xmas. Students are having harder time getting to communicate face to face with other students, and are losing their physical communication skills, for the fact that they spend more time communicating through social network.

Statement of the Problem

The advent of social networking promotes interaction with friends and families; offer teacher, librarians and students valuable access to educational support and materials; facilitate social and political change and disseminates useful information rapidly. Social networking is used by parents and teachers as a communication skill with many more teachers using a wide range of social networking sites. Teachers have begun to familiarize themselves in order to leverage students' interest in curriculum content. Most Universities now provide free internet services on campuses, to meet the growing and ever-changing information needs of both the students and their teachers. These services are provided at limitless time and are accessed through their phones and laptops. Saxena and Yadav (2013), posited, social network has made communication and information accessibility convenient and timely to users from the comfort of their own homes and from wherever they are. The advent of technology is quickly emerging and undeniably, it takes a vital part in people's lives today. One of the evidence of this is the development of social networking. Social networking provides instantaneous access to information at all times (Sum, 2018). With the evolution of social networking, the communication improves because it facilitates relationship with people around the world by sharing personal information, exchanges ideas, feelings, photos and videos at a very overwhelming rate. Social networking brought many positive implications to human life such as making the connection of millions of people from all over the world possible.

However, several scholars and researchers in and outside Nigeria have worked on the influence of technology on students' academic performance at various levels of educational system. For instance, Adebayo (2015) conducted a study on Social Media Use among Students of Universities in South East Nigeria; Eke (2014) researched on The Use of Social Networking Sites among The Undergraduate Students of University of Nigeria Nsukka. Ani (2015) wrote on Academic use of Social Networks among Undergraduates in Federal Universities in South East Nigeria. The review in this area therefore justifies the need for the present study. Therefore, this study is an effort to understand the possible influence of Socio-Networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. The researcher hopes that this study would be a value addition to this research area.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the influence of Socio-Networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Specifically this study is to find out:

a. Influence of social networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria based on gender.
b. Influence of social networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria based on students' level.
c. Influence of social networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria based on students' location.

Research Hypotheses

H01   There is no significant influence of social networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zariabased on gender.

H02.   There is no significant influence of social networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria based on students' level.

H03.   There is no significant influence of Social networks Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria based on students' location.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey research type. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select 100 Christian Religious Studies students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The researcher designed questionnaire that was used for the data collection. Data collected were analysed using t-test statistical instruments all at alpha level of 0.05. The face and content validity of the instrument were established by giving copies of the questionnaire to experts in educational research, in the Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Faculty of Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. This was done purposely to determine whether the instrument measured what it was designed to measure. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-retest method at an interval of three weeks. The results of the first and second tests were correlated using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient which yielded 0.67 to determine the consistency of the instrument.

Results

Table 1: **Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value showing Respondent's View on the influence of social networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria on gender**

Gender	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value	p-value
Males	60	4.54	4.98				
				198	2.29	1.96	.75
Females	40	4.42	5.92				

Table 1 presents data on the means, standard deviations and t- value of respondents' on the basis of gender. The table shows that the calculated t-value of 2.29 is greater than the critical t- value of 1.96 (p-value .75 > 0.05 level of significance). On this basis, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of social networks on academic performance of Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria based on gender was rejected.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value showing Respondent's View on the influence of social networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria on students' level

Students' Level	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value	p-value
Undergra Duate	70	9.37	6.13				
				198	2.39	1.96	.01
Post gruaduate	30	4.92	3.82				

Table 2 presents data on the means, standard deviations and t- value of respondents on the basis of students' level. The table shows that the calculated t-value of 2.39 is greater than the critical t- value of 1.96 (p-value .01 < 0.05 level of significance). On this basis, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of Social networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria on students' level was rejected.

$H0_3$.

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value showing Respondent's View on the influence of social networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria based on Students' Location

Students' Location	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value	p-value
Urban	75	12.50	6.07				
				198	1.97	1.96	.05
Rural	25	4.78	3.89				

Table 3 presents data on the means, standard deviations and t- value of respondents' on the basis of students' location. The table shows that the calculated t-value of 1.97 is greater than critical t- value of 1.96 (p-value .05 ≥ 0.05 level of significance). On this basis, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of Social networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zariabased on students' location was rejected.

Discussions
From the findings it was discovered that social networks influence both male and female students in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. This is in line with Ani (2015) who stated that social networks have major distraction on students, causing the overall decline of students' performance especially those that use it during study hours

Social network affects students from both rural and urban areas. This is also noted by Sum (2010) who is of the opinion that students today use social networks to post statuses, exchange messages and create a user profile. This cuts across both those in the rural and urban areas. Ani (2015) Stated that social network influence both undergraduates and post graduates students, it is clearly seen that these students use social networks to a point that some of the students are addicted to it negatively. This is supported by Adebayo(2015) who stated that many abandoned their assignments and reading times to chatting even in lecture hours. Also students use it to pass information as they join group chats to enable them discuss class assignments and information in the university.

Conclusion
The study concluded that there was a significant influence of social networks on Christian Religious Studies students' academic performance in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria based on gender, students' level and students' location.

Recommendations
In line with the conclusion on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.
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1. School should fully implement a web based style means of communication and learning through the internet because it will serves as a source of information which is far better than the manual method of information dissemination for both male and female students.
2. The scheme of work for the academic session should be placed online at all levels, to make the Christian Religious Studies students' materials in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria readily available at any time to enable the student be involved and interested in research activities.
3. Constant seminars and workshops should be organized for both students and lecturers on the importance of Social networks to teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

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