

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES ON SELF-EFFICACY OF TERTIARY INSTITUTION STUDENTS IN CROSS RIVER STATE

By

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of social media platforms on the self-efficacy of students in tertiary institutions within Cross River State, Nigeria. In an era where digital communication has become ubiquitous, understanding the role of social media in shaping the self-perception and academic performance of youth is crucial. To gather relevant data for testing the research question and hypothesis, a structured 12-item questionnaire was developed and administered to a sample of students. The collected data were analyzed using population t-tests and Pearson product-moment correlation analysis (r-statistics) to assess the relationships between social media usage and self-efficacy. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between the use of Facebook and the self-efficacy of tertiary institution students in contemporary Nigerian society. This suggests that engagement with social media, particularly Facebook, can enhance students' confidence in their academic abilities and overall self-worth. Consequently, it is concluded that the utilization of Facebook not only fosters self-efficacy of students but also influences various dimensions of their educational experiences and holistic development. Several recommendations were made including development of curriculum by policymakers to integrate knowledge of social media platforms.

Keywords: Social Media, Self-Efficacy, Youth, Tertiary Institution, Students, Cross River State

Introduction

Social media sites have brought about remarkable changes in our society due to its wonderful impacts on our daily lives, including teaching and learning procedures in school system. There are powerful instructional tool that have impacted enormously on how we think, live, learn and also go about our daily business activities considering the global information age. It is considered a major drive for the world economy (Grimus, 2011).

The use of Social media sites in the classroom teaching-learning as instructional delivery tool is very important as it provides opportunities for teachers and students to operate, store, manipulate, and retrieve information. It encourages independent and active learning and self-responsibility for learning such as distance learning, motivate teachers and students to continue using learning outside school hours, plan and prepare lessons and design materials such as course content delivery and facilitate sharing of resources, expertise and advice (Jonassen, & Reeves, 2016).

Social media sites provide opportunities to access an array of information using multiple information resources and viewing information from multiple perspectives, thus fostering the authenticity of the learning environments. Social

media sites may also make complex processes easier to understand through simulations that, again, contribute to authentic learning environments (Asuquo, & Onasanya, 2007).

Asuquo and Babalola (2019) stated that Social media sites can enhance the quality of education in several ways, by increasing learner motivation and engagement by facilitating the acquisition of basic skills and by enhancing teacher training. Social media sites are also transformational tools which, when used appropriately, can promote the shift to a new paradigm-the learner conferred environment-in this paper the student's self-efficacy. learner centred environment. The impact of social media on students' performance in school has become a matter of interest to a greater % of many Nigerians in recent times. Interactions among people on social media platform are made possible through the various networking websites using the internet. Social media usage has become an international phenomenon in the 21st century (Boyd, 2007).

Students have especially embraced these sites as a way to connect with their peers, share information, reinvent their personalities and showcase their social lives (Boyd, 2007). With the increase of technology used for communicating with others and the popularity of the Internet, use of social media as instructional tool has become an activity that students engage in primarily with the help of the Internet, with sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, X and Instagram, among others to enhance their self-efficacy (Coyle, 2008). The use of these social media sites serves as modern instructional packages that are indispensable tools in effective instruction within and outside the classroom. It enhances teaching and learning, especially where basic learning textbooks are lacking in most Nigerian public schools (Asuquo, 2020).

However, the effective use of these social media sites may depend on students' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the judgments action regarding one's capability to successfully perform specific tasks and behaviors. It is the belief in one's capability to organize and execute the course of action required to manage prospective situations. In essence, self-efficacy is the confidence that one has in one's ability to do the things that one tries to do. Self-efficacy is also seen as people's judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 2000). Students' self-efficacy to successfully use social media sites to perform specific academic tasks depends on the student. It is observed that some students spent more time chatting online rather than reading their books or using the sites for educational purpose, this may have some impacts on their self-efficacy in performing certain tasks in basic science. Furthermore, students with positive self-efficacy may have more courage to use social media sites to perform certain tasks in basic science while those with negative self-efficacy may find it difficult to do same. As to have a quantum leap in scientific and developmental achievement in research and transformation into a developed society.

Theoretical Framework

self-efficacy is anchored on Albert Banduras social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1964), which highlights how learning through observation, social experiences and shared determination influence personality development. This denotes that, in addition to a learner's self-perception, his mental processes depend directly or indirectly on observations of other people's actions and social interactions. Bandura also avers that self-efficacy is got from mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and physiological responses (Geraghty, 2013). Therefore, since the power to succeed lies inherently in every learner; but also need external factors to activate and escalate it into action, learning with mobile technology may be significant in improving learners' self-efficacy towards improved learning outcomes.

An individual's frequency of use of social media sites for academic purpose is likely to increase academic self-efficacy. Gibbs (2009) observed that, since academic self-efficacy refers to a person's perception of his computing ability, fundamentally, this suggests that a person's perception of his ability in performing academic tasks using social media can very much depend on whom they are comparing themselves with and the past experiences with tasks.

Waldman (2003) asserted that it is important to note that academic self-efficacy can be explained in terms of beliefs which vary according to subject matter. Students can have high academic self-efficacy in one component (e-mail, whatsapp, face book, X, Google, among others) and facebook among others) but may not have in another,

depending on their mastery and vicarious experience in a particular component. Ren (2000) explained further that students with high self-efficacy will be more likely to take advantage of what is around them. The frequent use of social media sites such as email, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. among others may help to enhance students' self-efficacy in basic science.

In contributing to the self-efficacy of students, Wagner (2008) saw social media as a forum that promotes group discussion which is time and distance independent. The World Wide Web service provided by the internet with over 5 million web sites allows students from all disciplines to source for and share relevant information. Busari (2001) sees the social media as a medium through which teachers and students can meet without seeing each other. Thus, present day students have the privilege of receiving lessons outside the confines of the classroom and the scheduled school hours. Although, it is argued that students at secondary school level may have limited access to social media because most of them do not have phones and personal computers, and even those who have may not be allowed free hand to use them especially at school. However, this could possibly be a major factor that influences secondary school students self-efficacy, to the extent that they could possibly be spending much of their time on social media whenever opportunity presents itself given the desire to feel among. To this end, this study becomes necessary.

Statement of the Problem

The ability of students to effectively utilize social media sites plays a crucial role in shaping their perceptions of self-efficacy and serves as a strong predictor of their academic performance. It is essential to recognize that academic self-efficacy beliefs can vary by subject; students may exhibit high self-efficacy in one area while struggling in another. This variation often depends on their mastery and vicarious experiences with social media for academic purposes. Concerns regarding students' negative self-efficacy and performance have raised alarms among educational stakeholders. The prevalence of unclear and confusing communication on social media appears to contribute to diminished self-efficacy among students when using these platforms for academic purposes. A robust self-awareness strategy that fosters confidence in learners is vital for developing their independence and mastery. Positive self-efficacy is linked to improved performance, while individuals with low self-efficacy often resign themselves to failure from the outset.

Despite on-going efforts by educational researchers to address the persistent issue of low self-efficacy in basic science, the problem remains. Observations indicate that students tend to prioritize social media usage over studying from textbooks, spending significant time online. The rise and popularity of social networking sites have prompted concerns among school authorities, communication experts, and socio-psychological researchers regarding the benefits and potential risks associated with students engaging in online social media for social interaction and information needs rather than focusing on their studies. Consequently, this research aims to investigate the relationship between social media utilization and self-efficacy among tertiary institution students in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this study is to investigate social media sites' influence on student's self-efficacy of tertiary institution students in Cross River State Nigeria. Specifically, the objective of the study is to:

- i. examine the relationship between social media sites and self-efficacy of tertiary institution students in Cross River State.

Research Question

- i. What is the relationship between social media sites and self-efficacy of tertiary institution students in Cross River State?

Research Hypotheses

The following two null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance for the study.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between social media usage and self-efficacy of tertiary institution students in Cross River State.

Literature Review

The rapid advancement of information technology, particularly the internet and artificial intelligence, is fundamentally reshaping social structures and facilitating a shift from traditional modernization to a new paradigm known as mediatisation. This transition is characterized by the pervasive integration of social media across various facets of society, which has become a hallmark of the Internet era (Jia, Liu, & Peng, 2024; Inyali, et al., 2022).

Social media plays a significant role in influencing self-efficacy and feelings of loneliness, primarily through the provision of social support. To harness the positive effects of social media, it is essential to avoid excessive usage and to enhance digital literacy among users (Jia, Liu, & Peng, 2024).

However, Flanagin, and Metzger (2014) highlight that social media platforms empower individuals to disseminate a diverse array of information by creating and sharing content across various applications, including blogs, wikis, and question-and-answer websites. However, the variability in the quality of information available on these platforms necessitates caution among information consumers regarding the trustworthiness of online social information. Interestingly, their findings indicate that users with higher social media self-efficacy are more inclined to trust information shared by other users, suggesting a complex relationship between self-efficacy and information trust.

Furthering this discourse, Pekkala and Zoonen (2022) explore the antecedents of communication self-efficacy and its impact on social media usage. Their research underscores the importance of understanding employees' capabilities to utilize social media effectively in professional contexts, which is vital for comprehending contemporary communicative behaviours.

In a study conducted by Chen and Gao (2022), the effects of social media self-efficacy on informational use, loneliness, and self-esteem among older adults were examined. The results revealed a strong and direct correlation between higher social media self-efficacy and increased informational use, reduced feelings of loneliness, and enhanced self-esteem. Additionally, social media self-efficacy positively influenced happiness, with loneliness and self-esteem serving as mediating factors. While informational use was found to decrease loneliness, it did not have a significant impact on self-esteem.

Bozkurt et al. (2023) investigated the influence of perceived social media agility on customer purchasing behaviour, considering the moderating effects of perceived social media self-efficacy and social anxiety. Their findings indicate that customers who perceive a brand as agile on social media are more inclined to purchase its products or services. Notably, individuals with high social media self-efficacy exhibit a greater willingness to buy from these brands, whereas those with high social anxiety tend to be less willing to engage in purchases.

Taba et al. (2022) express concern over the unregulated nature of the internet, which can facilitate the spread of biased, inaccurate, and low-quality health information. This dissemination poses significant risks, particularly for adolescents, as acting on such misinformation can lead to adverse health outcomes. The rapid spread of health misinformation through social media platforms underscores the need for critical evaluation of online health information.

Social media is also recognized as a vital online learning community, offering rich educational resources. Research by Xie, Cao, and Zheng (2021) indicates that higher levels of social media self-efficacy correlate with increased engagement in online learning. Therefore, enhancing students' social media self-efficacy is recommended to boost their learning engagement in the digital age.

Conversely, Hassell and Sukalich (2015) found negative correlations between social media use and academic performance, as well as with academic self-efficacy beliefs. Their study suggests that academic self-efficacy mediates the negative relationship between social media use and life satisfaction, a pattern that persists even when controlling for individual self-regulation levels.

Overall, the literature suggests that while self-efficacy may not directly correlate with the amount of time spent on social media, feelings of social disconnection may be linked to social media usage. Additionally, social media use has been shown to predict body image issues, although this relationship is contingent upon the methods used to measure social media engagement (Trimble, 2020).

In emergency situations, social media serves as a crucial tool for health-risk communication, facilitating the dissemination of relevant information and encouraging individuals to adopt preventive behaviours (Mahmood et al., 2021). This highlights the dual role of social media as both a source of potential misinformation and a vital communication channel in times of crisis.

Research Methodology

This study utilized a correlational research design to examine the relationships between variables and predict future trends, employing methods such as surveys (Isangedighi, 2012). The research was conducted in the Calabar Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria, which spans approximately 18,074.35 km² and includes seven Local Government Areas: Calabar South, Calabar Municipality, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Odukpani, Akamkpa, and Biase. The zone has around 3,305 Senior Secondary School students and 109 secondary schools, from which 11 were selected for this study. Data were collected using the questionnaire schedule which was distributed to the selected schools, and respondents were informed about the study's purpose and the importance of providing honest responses, with assurances of confidentiality. After collecting the completed questionnaires, codes and scores were assigned to each item. The data were analysed using population t-tests and Pearson product-moment correlation analysis (r-statistics) to assess the relationships between the variables.

Results

Hoi: The availability of media web-sites is not significantly high in Cross River State. To analyses this hypothesis population t-test was applied thus: $t_p =$

$$= \frac{S_1 - S_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2 + S_2^2}{n - 1}}}$$

Table 1

Population t-test analysis of availability of media web sites in Cross River State tertiary institutions. N = 325

There is no significant relationship between social media usage and students' self-efficacy of tertiary institution students in Cross River State. The independent variable in this hypothesis is social media (Facebook) usage; while the dependent variable is students' self-efficacy. To test this hypothesis, students' self-efficacy in Basic Science was correlated with Facebook usage using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between Facebook usage and Students' self-efficacy in Basic Science (N=325)

Variables	X	—	SD	r-value	Sig.
Facebook availability	17.313		3.45.2	0.622	.000
Social media (Facebook) usage	21.4831		1.80633		
				0.851*	.000
Students' self-efficacy	36.1138		3.12832		

* Significant at .05, p-value =.000, df = 323

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 1 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.851 is significant at .05 level of significance with 323 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between social media (Facebook) usage and students' self-efficacy of tertiary institution students in Cross River State was rejected. This result indicated that, Facebook usage has a significant positive relationship with students' self-efficacy. The positive r implied that the more positive social media usage is the higher students' self-efficacy tends to be. On the other hand the lower Facebook usage, the lower students' self-efficacy.

Discussion of Findings

The statistical analyses conducted in this study indicate a significant positive relationship between Facebook usage and the self-efficacy of students. This finding aligns with the perspective of Wu (2012), who identified three key educational values of Facebook as an educational tool. Firstly, it provides essential social support for students; secondly, it facilitates interaction with teachers; and thirdly, it enhances the relationships among individuals, thereby improving students' self-efficacy.

The role of Facebook as a social networking site has garnered considerable attention from researchers due to its unique features that allow users to create profiles, generate and share content, and interact with both known and unknown contacts. This platform has seen substantial growth, resulting in widespread usage across various age groups and demographics.

Moreover, the findings resonate with the broader literature on social media's impact on self-efficacy. For instance, Chen and Gao (2022) demonstrated that higher social media self-efficacy is associated with increased informational use and reduced loneliness among older adults, suggesting that similar dynamics may be at play among tertiary institution students. Additionally, the work of Pekkala and Zoonen (2022) emphasizes the importance of communication self-efficacy in professional contexts, which may also reflect the educational benefits of social media platforms like Facebook. Overall, the positive relationship between social media usage and self-efficacy underscores the platform's potential as a valuable educational resource, fostering social connections and enhancing students' confidence in their abilities.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the use of social media significantly boosts students' self-efficacy, positively impacting various aspects of their educational experience and overall development. Students who engage with educational content on social media and similar online platforms achieve better learning outcomes compared to those who rely solely on traditional teaching methods, which are increasingly viewed as less effective in the digital age.

The interactive nature of social media creates a more engaging learning environment, enabling students to collaborate, share resources, and receive immediate feedback from peers and educators. This dynamic fosters a sense of community and support, which is essential for enhancing self-efficacy and building confidence in academic abilities.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Students should take notes while engaging with educational content on Facebook and other online platforms to reinforce learning and improve information retention.
- ii. Educational stakeholders, including curriculum developers and educators, should integrate social media into the curriculum to enhance students' learning experiences and academic performance.
- iii. Future research should replicate this study to validate findings and investigate the long-term effects of social media usage on students' self-efficacy and academic success.
- iv. Students should reflect on their learning experiences using Facebook and similar platforms to identify effective study habits and better utilize these tools for academic goals.
- v. Schools should offer training sessions for students and teachers on the effective and responsible use of social media for educational purposes.
- vi. Parents should engage in discussions about the educational use of social media, promoting a balanced approach that encourages academic engagement while addressing potential distractions.

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