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Perception And Attitude Towards The Use Of Social Media Network Among Benue State University Undergraduates

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ABSTRACT: This study examines perception and attitude towards the use of social media network among Benue state university undergraduates. The study employed an ex post facto research design to investigate how each variable influence social media network and their joint influence. A sample of 320 participants were randomly selected consisting of 189 (59.1%) male and 131(40.9%) female with ages ranging from 18-43 (Mean age=25) were. Three instruments namely: Perception Scale, Attitude Scale and Social Media Network Scale were used for data collation and the reliability Coefficient of the actual instrument in the study was arrived at Cronbach's alpha .78 for perception .76 for Attitude and .81 for Social Media Network Scale. Data collate were analyzed using multiple linear regression. Results revealed that perception independently predicted the use of social media network. Attitude did not independently predict the use of social media network. Perception and attitude jointly predicted the use of social media network among Benue State University undergraduates. Based on the findings, therefore the study recommends that students' use of social media network should not be seen as a crime or social vices. Nevertheless, the use of social media during productive hours like lectures, exams, be avoided so as to concentrate more on their studies. Undergraduates should also be weary of the dangers associated with the use of social media such as, cyber crime- impersonation, job scam, defrauding amongst others.

Keywords: Perception, attitude, social media network, university undergraduates.

Date of Submission: 14-08-2018 Date of acceptance: 31-08-2018

I. INTRODUCTION

There is no gain saying to the fact that social media networking sites are fast becoming very popular means of both interpersonal and public communication in Nigeria. Social media networking sites are modern interactive communication channels through which people connect to one another, share ideas, experiences, pictures, messages and information of interest. Student's attitude to social networking sites permeates majorly for pleasure and recreational purposes more so to common young generation worldwide ^{1.} Social networking sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Xander, Blackberry Messenger, Yahoo, Google, amongst others are majorly use by students at the tertiary institutions which becomes an integral part of human daily lives ².

Social media network negatively and positively influence academic performance of undergraduates depending on one's perception and attitude. On the other hand social media network enhances greater social interaction via electronic media for greater access to information and creating a sense of belonging to users ³.

Nowadays, the new generation spends more time surfing the net for communication via social media network in their daily lives for social purposes. This can be seen to support a range of applications which display qualities associated with educational technologies for e-learning process which is use at University level for communication, participation, interactivity and collaboration ⁴.

Interestingly, the level of participation, interaction and collaboration within the students and lecturers has also increased with the use of social media network tools in e-learning. The social media by their nature have the capabilities of educating, informing, entertaining and inflaming the audience with high speed across the wide world. Above all, they possess a contagious and outreaching influence which the conventional media lack 5

Boyd and Ellision ⁶, define social networking sites as: "Web based services that allow individuals to construct a Public or semi-public profile within a bounded system (ii) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and (iii) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system".

In contemporary society, there are many different social media network sites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Blackberry messenger, Badoo, Imo, Instagram, YouTube, 2go, Myspace, Gmail, yahoo,

DOI: 10.9790/0837-2308066975 www.iosrjournals.org 69 | Page

goggle+, amongst others that support a wide range of students 'perception and attitudes toward its usage ⁷. Relatedly, students nowadays use Google, Yahoo, Opera Mini, UC browser, and other search engine to surf for lecture materials for project, assignment, general reading and use of concepts and construct for learning purpose. Conversely, some undergraduates spend ample time to surf for social or recreational purpose to make friends, engage in online dating, do business, look for job, to show case their talent and potentials and sometimes to engage in frivolous activities. However, Facebook is the most increasing visited social media network sites among undergraduates in tertiary institutions ⁷.

Undergraduate's perception of social media network is the process of recognizing and interpreting sensory stimuli to take in information about the cyber space worldwide and make sense of it. Student's perception of social media network would be positive if use for learning purpose or negative if use for frivolous purpose depending on one's view point and its usage ⁸. Perception of undergraduates towards the use of social media can be dependent on individual variations and the context it is used. Perception is the ability to see or become aware of something through the use of senses. The way in which something is regarded, understood or interpreted is majorly dependent on the student discretion to either perceived social media network sites either as positively for enhancing academic performance or negatively by using it frivolously. Regrettably most undergraduates spend more time on social networking sites which affect their academic performance negatively. Nigerian students do spend ample time and resources surfing the net not basically for e-learning but for recreational purpose at the detriment of their academic pursuit ^{10,11}.

Attitude on the other hands is the tendency to like or dislike something such as an idea, person, behaviour, action or thing. An attitude is an expression of favour or disfavour towards a person, place, thing or event ¹² described attitude as the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary social psychology. Attitude can be formed from a person's past and present. It is the readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way. In addition attitude of undergraduates towards the use of social media network would be encompassing. Some would like social media while others will dislike its usage depending on one's disposition. Attitudes often come in pairs, one conscious and the other unconscious ¹³.

Undergraduates' attitude towards the use of social media is largely conceived in a negative way rather than using it in a positive direction. More often than not, student's engage in the use of social media network basically in a negative way such as online dating, watching pornographic movies, playing online games, insulting leaders/politicians amongst other frivolous activities rather than for educative purpose ¹⁴. Often times students use social media basically for the purposes of making friendship, leisurely entertainment, to watch films, dating, debate /discuss critical political, social, economic, and religious issues to the determent of their academic pursuit. Social networking has come to be seen in many countries including Nigeria as a source of bad influence due to wrong application of it by youths especially in the tertiary institutions across country. Many students cannot go for two to three hours without updating their profile on these social networking sites especially Facebook, whatsAapp, twitter, Yahoo, Google, YouTube, amongst others ^{15,16}.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Eke, Omekwu, and Odoh ¹⁷ study on: The use of Social Networking Sites among the Undergraduate Students, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria using sample size of 150 and their findings showed that virtually all the students were using the social networking sites in interaction with friends, connecting to their class mates for online study and for discussing serious national issues, making friends and watching movies for their pleasures.

Irwin , Ball, and Desbrow , ¹⁸ study on students perceptions of using Facebook as an interactive learning resource at university of Queensland, Britain found out that majority of students (n=110, 76.4%) recommended the use of Facebook as effective tool for e-learning and social interaction. Their findings recommended the use of social media for students' usage as a learning aid and a potential to promote collaborative and cooperative learning ¹⁹. enumerated various problems confronting students on the use of social media to include the issue of fraud, dating, scam, also known as yahoo boys, pornography, piracy, unauthorized hacking into data base of corporate organization in order to defraud it, job scams, amongst other vices.

Osazee-Odia²⁰ studied university students' perceptions and usage: behaviour of mobile media technologies in Nigeria alluded that perception of mobile media technology was significant in influencing students' perception and attitude toward media network. Student usage of social media was for social relationship in order to connect to people worldwide.

Adaja and Ayodele ²¹ study on Nigerian youths and social media: harnessing the potential for academic excellence among student of Olabashi Onabanjo University, Ogun, Nigeria revealed that: Facebook is the most widely used platform by the Nigerian students for communication for recreational and collaborative purpose. Over half of the respondents use Facebook as their favourite network platform for social interaction. Again, over two-thirds of the sample agreed to have used Facebook platform to send or receive information. This shows that

the network is popular among Nigerian Youths. Those who use Facebook platform agreed that they frequently use it for leisure. However, it is important to note that 67% of the respondents who use Facebook use it for other things different from academic networking. As popular as Facebook is, and with its potentials for networking, only 33% of the respondents use the network for academic purpose for information exchange ²².

Sherry ²³ asserted that the perception and attitude of students' use of social media network sites permeates from convenience it give users to communicate effectively with high speed with one another worldwide. Nevertheless, this can damage their interpersonal communication if furiously used to harm and tarnish ones reputation. Relatedly, social networking sites make the users see one another as objects to be accessed and only for the parts that the users find useful depending on his/her perception and attitude. Addiction to social networking sites can establish feelings of loneliness and increase feelings of insensitivity to disconnection and lack of academic concentration, reckless spending on subscription for megabytes or airtime and generally low productivity and performance.

Tashir, Hashem, Harun, and Shukor ²⁴ research on students perception towards the use of social networking as an e-learning Platform among Undergraduate of the University of Technology, Malaysia using 234 students and the findings indicated that students satisfaction of current e-learning system was in a moderately positive level (mean=3,77). Students agreed on using social networking as an e-learning platform for academic purpose and social interaction. The type of the students programme was however has no effect on student's perception neither towards current e-learning system nor in the required skills of using social networking effectively.

Onomo²⁵ posited that social networking sites has become a widespread tool for communication and exchange of ideas, helping individuals and organizations with just causes to reach a phenomenally vast audience within a seconds that could hitherto not be reached by traditional media. Thus, the perception and attitude of subscribers of these social media networks sites have strong influence on millions of users, many of whom have been made to use these sites as parts of their daily activities for informative, educative, make money while others perceive it negatively depending on one's conviction²⁶.

Ellison ²⁷ study on Social media networking and the academic performance of university students in Nigeria: A study of the Rivers State, University, Port Harcourt. Found out that social media network negatively affect students cumulative grade point average (CGPA) hence much of productive hours are lost in surfing the net for recreational purpose.

Based on the extant literature review, it was observed that a study on student perception and attitude towards the use of social media network in Benue State is scanty (if any) has necessitated the study to Benue State university undergraduates. Therefore, we have hypothesized thus:

- H1 Perception will significantly influence the use of social media network among Benue State University Undergraduates.
- H2 Attitude will significantly influence the use of social media network among Benue State University Undergraduates.
- H3 Perception and attitude will jointly influence the use of social media network among Benue State University Undergraduates.

III. METHOD

Design

The research design was an ex post facto. The predictor variables were perception and attitude while the criterion variable was social media network. The Researcher did not manipulate any variable rather questionnaire method was used to elicit responses from participants on the use of social media network ²⁸.

Setting

The study setting was Benue State University Makurdi, Nigeria. The University is the State Government owned institution and was established in 1992 by the then Gov of the State, late Rev.Fr Moses Adasu. The location of the university is at southern bridgehead of River Benue along Makurdi-Gboko Road ²⁹.

Participants

The participants for the study were drawn from Benue State University Makurdi. A total number of three hundred and twenty (320) participants were randomly selected for the study consisting of 189 (59.1%) male and 131(40.9%) female. Their ages ranged from 18 - 43 years with the mean age of 25. The level of their study showed that 100 level were 14 (4.4%), 200 level were 65 (20.3%), 300 level students were 110 (34.4%) while 400 level were 99 (30.9%). In additional, 500 level students were 22 (6.9%) while that of 600 level were 10 (3.1%) respectively.

Instrument

Three research instruments were used to collate data for the study. The instrument for data collation was adopted from the work by ^{30,} from their study title: The use of social networking sites among undergraduates,

University of Nigeria, Nsukka. And from the work of ³¹ 'on topic: a study of university students' perceptions and usage behaviour of mobile media technologies in Nigeria with modification by the researcher to fully incorporate the study variables after total- item analysis was done on all the scales.

Questionnaire contains four sections. Section "A" contains demographical information about the respondent's sex, age, religion, income status and level of study. Section "B" contains 10-item on perception and Section "C" contains 10 -item that measured attitude and section "D" contains 12- item that measured the criterion variable – social media network. The instrument uses Likert 5- points scales of measurement ranging from: strongly agree, agree, neutral/undecided, disagree and strongly disagree respectively.

Psychometric properties of the instrument, the scales have the reliability coefficient at Cronbach's alpha level of .72 and construct validity of .45. The reliability Coefficient of the actual instrument for perception scale has Cronbach's alpha .78 and Attitude Scale yielded a reliability coefficient at Cronbach's alpha of .76 and Social Media Network Scale yielded Cronbach's alpha. 82.

Procedure

Briefing, debriefing, informed consent and respondent's confidentiality were done before test administration. Researcher administered questionnaire himself with the help of two research assistants who were Non Academic Staff of the University during lectures free hours. Researcher trained the said two research assistants on how to administer the questionnaire to undergraduates across different faculties and departments. Stipends inform of cash were given to research assistants at the end of the exercise. 355 copies of questionnaires were administered to undergraduates however only 320 were returned; 35 copies were not returned. Consequently, 320 copies of questionnaires were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 21) for the data analysis.

The duration for test administration was 2 weeks while retrieval ran concurrently for 2 weeks of test administration.

IV. RESULTS

In testing the research hypotheses, multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the degree of relationship between study variables. The results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of Multiple linear regression scores showing independent influence of perception, attitude and its joint influence on social media network among Benue state university undergraduates.

Predictor variables	R	R ²	F	β	t	Sig
Perception				.189	3.399	.001
Attitude				.026	.470	.638
Perception and Attitude	.194	.037	6.17	-	8.602	.002

Criterion variable: Social media network. Note: *= P < .05; **= P < .01

The result presented in Table 1 revealed that independently there was a significant and positive influence of perception on social media networks among Benue State University undergraduates (β =.189, P<.01) This implied that perception is related to social media network among Benue Sate University undergraduates. Conversely, attitude was not found to be significant on the use of social media network among Benue State University Undergraduates (β =.026, P>.05). Attitude was not related with the use of social media network among Benue State University Undergraduates.

In addition, the results in table one revealed that there was a joint influence of perception and attitude on the use of social media network among Benue State university undergraduates R=194; $R^2=037$; F(2, 317)=6.174; P<.01) there was a joint influence of perception and attitude on the use of social media network among Benue State University undergraduates.

V. DISCUSSION

Results for hypothesis one stated that perception will significantly influence the use of social media network among Benue State University Undergraduates was tested using multiple linear regression analysis and the result was positively and significant. This implied that perception is a predictor of social media network among Undergraduates. As the level of students perception increase, the level of social media network also increases in a positive direction. In other words, perception is related with the use of social media network positive and significant among undergraduates. The finding is in support of the study by ³², who revealed a significant influence of perception on the usage of social media network. Virtually all the students perceived

and were using social media network to interacting with friends and connecting to their class mates. Similarly this result is in line with the study by ^{33,} that perception influences the use of social media network among college students. Following the result therefore, the hypothesis one was confirmed.

Results of hypothesis two which predicted that attitude will significantly influence the use of social media network among Benue State University Undergraduates was tested using multiple linear regression and the results was not significant. This implied that student's attitude has no relationship or influence on the use of social media network among Benue State University undergraduates. Attitude was not a predictor of social media network among undergraduates. There was no positive relationship between attitude and the use of social media network. Following the result therefore, the hypothesis two was not confirmed. This findings is in support with ³⁴ on attitude of university students towards social media usage who found out that attitude is not a predictor of social media usage by university student. Conversely, the finding is however at variance with ³⁵ on the use of social media networking sites among undergraduates of University of Nsukka, Nigeria. The level of attitude influenced social media network among university students. Similarly this finding does not dovetailed with that of ³⁶ on student's attitude towards social media and learning modalities who found out an overwhelming majority of students made use of social media in their daily life. There was significant influence of attitude on social media network. Following this result therefore, hypothesis two was not confirmed.

Results on hypothesis three which sought to find out the joint influence of perception and attitude towards social media network among Benue State university undergraduates was tested using multiple linear regression and the result was positive and significant. By implication, this result indicated that both perception and attitude jointly predict social media network among Benue State university undergraduates. That is perception and attitude jointly predicts social media networks among Benue State University undergraduates. The findings of this study is however, dovetailed with that of ^{37,} on student's attitude and perceptions of using Facebook as an interactive learning resource at university was positive and significant and ³⁸ also affirmed this findings. Students found a positive relationship between attitude and perception of the social media network sites. Those who were more knowledgeable and perceive more on the use of social media were more susceptible for the use of Facebook, Twitter, whatsApp, Google, Badoo, YouTube, yahoo amongst other social media sites ^{39,40,} also lend credence to this finding that perception and attitude jointly determine the use of social media network among college students such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and You Tube was significant. Following the finding therefore, hypothesis three was confirmed.

VI. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study was conducted to examine perception and attitude towards the use of social media networks among Benue State University Undergraduates. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded and recommends thus:

- i. Perception significant and positively influence the use of social media network among Benue State University Undergraduates. Therefore the study recommends that student's use of social media network should not be seen as a negative sense but positively important for students. However caution should be emphasized not to abuse it use during productive hours like lectures, seminar and exams so as to concentrate more on their studies.
- ii. There was no significant influence of attitude on the use of social media networks among Benue State University undergraduates. Therefore the study recommends that student's attitude should not be seen as having influence towards the use of social media network. Students' attitude does not account for the use of social media network.
- iii. Perception and attitude jointly and significantly predicted social media network among Benue State university undergraduates. Therefore, the study recommends that students' use of social media network should not be seen as crime or social vices for students in relation to academic pursuit. Nevertheless, undergraduates should be weary on the abuse and dangers associated with the use of social media network such as cyber crime -job scam, kidnapping, impersonation, defrauding, immoral act such as prostitution and pornography amongst others.

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Patrick Saaondo," 'Perception And Attitude Towards The Use Of Social Media Network Among Benue State University Undergraduates ." IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS). vol. 23 no. 08, 2018, pp. 69-75.