

## **Influence of social media on social behaviour of post graduate students. A case study of Salford University, United Kingdom.**

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**Abstract:** *The present study examined the academic relevance, possible effects on social behaviour and academic progress of social media on post graduate students. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection involving questionnaire administration and oral interview. Eighteen questions with Likert model responses in a questionnaire were physically administered to 120 randomly selected post graduate students who have social media accounts while six other students were interviewed differently face to face and their responses recorded. The obtained data were analysed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The results revealed that many students use social media especially Facebook and that they spend increasing amount of quality time on these networks. Findings of this study suggest that social media could negatively impact on the students' social behaviour, academic progress and that a timed-off software should be installed to control its use by students This study will be of immense benefit to the university administration as it has shown the potent dangers of uncontrolled use of these social media by students and therefore the need to put in place measures to forestall its alluded negative effects.*

**Key words:** *Social media, Likertmodel, Facebook, questionnaire.*

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### **I. Introduction**

The Internet started as far back as 1969, and then known as ARPANET; it was originated and developed by ARPA (Advanced Research Project Agency) that operated with the US Defence Department, [1]. The aim of ARPANET was to establish communication amongst military agencies and store huge amount of important data/information as regards the nuclear holocaust. The aim was to ensure that the defence communication network survived any nuclear attack. This was successfully achieved through the use of a network that allowed data to pass through multiple ways from the data source to data destination, [2]. According to Comer [3] assuming the network got destroyed; there would be full communication through other paths. This is the origin of the Internet.

The internet comprises millions of interconnected computers and has the greatest information storage globally. It is very difficult to calculate users of the internet in the whole world and come out with an exact figure, but it is possible to give an estimate of number of users. Social media is defined as web-based activities which give access to individuals to build unrestricted or semi-public profiles in a confined system; locate and connect to some other users, view and navigate the list of connections with the ones created by others inside the system, [4]. Social media can also be thought of as belonging to a group of internet-based activities which built around an ideological and technological basis of web 2.0 platform, which enable the construction and exchange of consumer generated content, [5]. It is believed that social media sites actually produce a remarkable effect on the users' social behavioural patterns, [6]. Users always have the guidelines of how to make maximum use of the SMTs through the profiles. Profile means the recording and organisation of behaviours [7]. The user's profile can contain such information as user's name, age, gender, locality, pictures, hobbies, what etc. Dwyer et al.[8] reported that a profile is digitally self-presenting machinery to the users. SMTs such as Facebook, MySpace Twitter, possess some features that assist users to video, share and interact fully on the websites by letting users' profiles into the Internet. Social media networks are means of grouping individuals of the same community to the same basis of related interest. To form a network, there must be full accommodation that will create possible interactions. SMTs create the same opportunity with a platform of unlimited restrictions as long as you are registered with that particular network, [9]. To belong to a particular social media network, you must provide your profile and express a readiness to share ideas and interact with others.

According to Clippinger [10], human beings have always appeared in social classes and always have highly cultured social signalling and administrative mechanisms which enforce difficult forms of supportive behaviours. According to Clippinger [10] the primates have been proved, in the history of discovery and evolution to exhibit group social behaviour and it is observed that they carry out activities in groups. A study carried out about the world's population highlighted that over 60% of the world's populace will migrate to the cities by 2030,[11]. Man in need of social context is one of the reasons behind social media phenomenon [12].

### **Statement of the problem**

Social network sites which were introduced in less than a decade ago have drawn large numbers of users (students). Kord [13] confirmed that the involvement of students in social media has increased considerably since 2004. Recent studies carried out by some researchers reported that 80% to 90% of students in the Universities are actively involved with at least a particular social media, [14,15, 16,17]. Boyd [18] reported that teenagers and students embraced social media so as to interact with peers, for information sharing, re-formulate their personalities thereby getting their social lives off the ground.

The researcher observed that students can spend several hours a day attending to different social media sites even during formal classes and library session thereby creating distractions and reducing the time for focusing on their studies.

For example, in a formal class or when in the library some students normally leave their handset on and silently chatting on the social networking sites When the lecturer sets an examination, expecting a good feedback; majority of the students will not do well. This scenario is ominous for both the students involved and the society at large. If this situation is not put under control, it will affect the students' focus towards academics and possibly increase the number of students dropping out of school. The study is therefore aimed at exploring the concept of social media, its meaning, usage and how it impacts on academic work and social behaviour of the students and to investigate the attitude of students towards the use of social media during formal class and library; how it affects their academic and social well-being.

## **II. Research Methodology**

The study is being undertaken to investigate the attitude of students towards using social media tools, measure and estimate the time spent by students on social media, and whether it affects their academic work positively or negatively as well as its effect on the students' social behaviours. As a result of this, the primary source of information for the researcher was students. In this section, the procedure used for the participants' selection for this study was explained and their responses was measured and evaluated. This research work investigated the attitudes of students towards the use of social media (Facebook, MySpace and Twitter) and its effect on social behaviour of students. A mixed method approach, which involved qualitative and quantitative paradigms, was adopted for data collection. According to Gay *et al.* [19] the combination of the approaches is like adding flesh to bone. It is an encouraging strategy to solve some educational research difficulties. The researcher chose the mixed method so as to be able to perform an in-depth and reliable study. The approach was also chosen to arrive at clear and publishable results that would be relevant to existing literature and existing relationships.

### **Sampling**

A total of 120 postgraduate students was randomly selected from the population of postgraduate students. From the same population, another, 6 students which consist of both male and female students were randomly selected and interviewed. These included the general students and their course representatives. This measure ensured that the targeted population in the postgraduate school is fully represented, and to have enough data

### **Research Questions (RQ)**

- (a) Does social media usage has negative effects on students' social behaviour?
- (b) Are there ways to control the use of social media during formal class and library by students?

## **III. Results and Discussion**

### **Effects of Social Media Usage on Students' Social Behaviour**

**Interview question 1:** How can social media affect a student's social behaviour negatively?

Table 1: Responses on effect of social media

Interviewee 1	Negatively, students using social media on daily bases often times leads to addiction. And he will be affected academically with poor results and at times become a dropout. It can cause students to learn bad slangs and become irresponsible or disrespectful to people because of what they copied from their bad friends online.
Interviewee 2	Negatively, it can make a student to become addicted and dropout from school especially students that are using it in the formal class. Like many students use it in library instead of reading their books for up to 4hours, thereby wasting the time they will use to solve academic problems.

Questionnaire response analysis

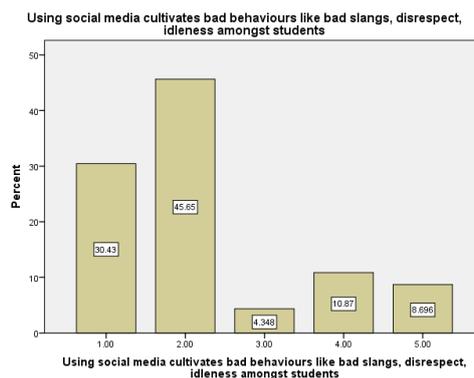


Figure 1: Cultivates bad behaviour

Figure 1 above, shows that 30.43% of respondents Strongly Agreed that students using social media cultivate bad behaviours (like bad slangs, disrespect, idleness); 45.65% Agreed, 4.35% were undecided, 10.87% disagreed while 8.70% strongly disagreed.

This indicated that the respondents emphasized that constant involvement in social media can make the student become a habitual social media user. This can lead the student to frustration and eventually to become academic drop-out. Also the respondents said that the nude pictures seen online can easily lead the students to immorality. Addicted use will also enhance other deviant behaviours including use of bad slangs, disrespect to parents, teachers, and the law in the society. Similarly, figure 1 showed that majority of the respondents agreed that using social media encourages cultivation of bad behaviours such as bad slangs, disrespect, and idleness amongst students. Social media affect students academically in that the time they would have used to study is used to socialise and watch pictures. This manifests in submitting hastily done assignment without review. At times their assignments are left undone.

#### IV. Discussion of the findings.

##### *Does social media usage has negative effects on students’ social behaviour?*

Social behaviour means a response focused towards the humanity or existing among members of the same species which happens because of social communication. Examples of negative social behaviour are dishonesty, nuisance, crime, violence, online sexual crime, etc. The response from the interviewees in table 1 and 78.08% of the respondents in the questionnaire (figure 1) which accepted that social media can easily lead the users to negative social behaviours especially with the nude pictures posted online, copying bad slangs from friends’ online, causing riots or disorder, become addicted and abandon academic pursuits and others concurred with Michele and Kimberly,[20] who studied the risks in using social media (Facebook, MySpace and Twitter) which increased youths’ exposure to sexual harassment. Their report revealed that 15% of the students experienced unwanted solicitation in social media. Kord [13] confirmed that students’ behaviours are easily influenced by social media sites because of distasteful comments posted to harass peers. In this research study, 76.08% acknowledged that social media sites have negative social effects on individuals and society. Through it, people can easily be duped or even lured into immorality. This finding agreed with Michele and Shonna [21] who stated that approximately 51% of 21Millions of youths/students that engage in social media sites on daily bases have been socially affected more of negatively. **Social media influence on social behaviours**

Social behaviour can be either positive or negative in the sense that users are often times susceptible to the negative aspect of it especially when users (students) come in contact with a deviant. Social behaviour is an integral part of social psychology that comprises help with violent behaviour including some aspects of romantic association. Attitude, self-concept, collaboration or communication, conflict reduction etc. are all determinants of social behaviour, [22]. It is a kind of response channelled to the society within the same group of species which can either be positive or negative. According to Alexander and Salas, [23], the internet was initially meant for academic information collection for research, but in recent times, it is increasingly used for communication amongst people and for entertainment business especially by students. Bonds-Raacke and Raacke, [24] reported that social media has the adolescents’ way of thinking/reasoning and interacting including the way they collect information. The research study carried out by [25] showed that more than 90% of the teenagers in the US access the internet and above 75% used the internet at least once in a day just to socialize. Another researcher Tynes, [26] confirmed that parents are very much worried because of their teens’ habitual use of social media sites which make them to abandon their academic activities. Even schools and the society at large are getting worried, notwithstanding that there are strict rules established by various school authorities on the use of these technological gadgets. Mesch [27] said that internet-bullying where harassing messages are sent to the various individuals that can lead to embarrassment, belittlement, suicide, and etcetera. Abdullah *et al.*,

[28] Lent *et al.*, [29] complained that many students lose the social grace of giving due respect to their teachers and even to their parents after so much involvement in the social media with its influences.

ComScore [30] confirmed that the number of students that visit social media is enormous compared to those that visit Yahoo MSN or gaming sites. ComScore Media Metrix said that social media play a major role in students' culture since there is provision of space for them to express their opinions, among peers, make comments, upload pictures, blog, interact with new friends, share ideas and establish an imagination of how they see themselves, etcetera. [30] concluded that teens/youths are now revealing all that are in their mind in the cyberspace in order to get responses. Their inward thoughts and behaviours are placed online, not knowing that the government agencies, online marketers, online marauders are recording and archiving the data. Social media has turned to be a powerful surveillance tool. Susan [32] reported that schools and parents should educate their students and wards on the advantages and disadvantages as well as proper and improper usage of social media and the internet. Also, Kirshner and Karpinski, [33] concluded that social media is commonly used among youth/students who exhibits care free attitude, luxurious living and generally flout laws, easily copy bad attitude, are disrespectful to parents and teachers, not serious with their academic works/studies etc. Shih [34] confirmed that social media has drowned most of the students/youths' attention to the extent that they have become addicted.

## V. Conclusion:

Social media have many negative effects on the students' social behaviour. It can negatively affect academic pursuits because of the time spent by the users which does not often relate to academics. In this study, findings disclosed that students can spend at least 2-3hours daily on social media. It can lead to or inspire improper behaviour which may include riot/demonstration, gossips, terrorism, and disorderly behaviour. As in the case of deviants who always have many friends, it could become a hub for grooming youths in immoral acts. Any student that linked a deviant as a friend will likely be influenced by the deviant. The friendships struck in social media have a potential for anti-social conduct.

## Recommendations and generalization

Findings of this study should not be generalized to other institutions since all the respondents are from Salford University. It is necessary for the University to be strict over the students that use social media as this might affect their social behaviour. software can be installed in the server computers to time-out students that spend more than 20minutes in the social media sites. This measure will enable them concentrate on their academic. Similarly, University authority can ban using social media in the formal class and library with bold written fliers at strategic positions as a reminder to the students. University policies on social media on users should be guarded jealously. Social media can be for bad and students are more vulnerable to it. University social media policy must be made mandatory for every institution and remain implemented since findings from this study shows that academic work is negatively affected. Software developers should create software that could be used to control social media usage in the campus so that students will not lose their primary aim of being in the University.

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