

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING SOCIAL MEDIA- ADDICTED LEARNERS IN BUSINESS CLASSROOMS

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DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.26135.18082

Abstract

Students staring vacantly into the oblivion, chatting, playing games, yawning and taking bathroom breaks are common in many business classrooms. Such behaviors are signs of disengagement and indicate boredom. Indeed, students who spend a lot of their private time connecting with people through social media and technology could be bored in classrooms where they are required to do something entirely different – just sit down and listen. This has contributed to the graduation of people with low academic achievements and who are unemployable. This study was conducted to investigate the delivery practices that engage social media-addicted students. A descriptive survey design was used for the investigation. Subjects were 381 students of business administration and business education in two universities in South East Nigeria, who responded to a 45-item questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by 5 experts and pre-tested. The pre-test result produced a Chronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient of 0.822. Data were analysed using frequency, percentage and mean. Results revealed that social media addicted-students would be engaged in class activities if teachers use methods that allow students share their knowledge and experiences and if teachers integrate social media in their instructions. These observations, among others, underline the need for business educators to improve their capacity to integrate technology and media as well as create and manage collaborative classrooms.

Keywords: Instructional practices, social media, social media addiction, student engagement, business educators, millennials, centennials

Introduction

Social media such as *Facebook*, *WhatsApp*, *Twitter* and *Instagram* have become popular means of communication, not only in social contexts but also in business and educational systems. Social media is defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated contents (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Boyd and Ellison, (2007) were more descriptive in their definition. They defined social media as a public web-based service that permits users to create personal profile, identify other users with whom they can relate to or have a connection with, read and react to posts made by other users on the site, and send and receive messages either privately or publicly. In line with this description, Kuss and Griffiths (2011) referred to social media as virtual communities where users can create individual public profiles, interact with real-life friends, and meet

other people based on shared interests. Individuals visit social media sites to engage in many different types of entertainments and social activities including playing games, socializing, passing time, communicating, and posting pictures (Allen et al., 2014). Social media is, therefore, a powerful tool that connects people and provides leisure.

Social media has also become an invaluable tool in business and has changed the game in business communication (Dolan, 2014), especially in societies with high internet penetration. In such societies, social media now seems to be one of the most effective ways of advertising products and services, communicating with existing and potential customers, attracting new customers and sustaining customer relationships. The increasing popularity of social media has led to the emergence of powerful concepts such as social media marketing and networking. Accordingly, business administration and education programmes in Nigerian Universities are being redefined to focus on these contemporary issues. Thus, in business classes in universities where education is dynamic and responsive, teachers help students develop skills that will enable them use social media effectively in business context. They also help students become discerning and confident users of social media and technology in social and formal settings; participate effectively in social and business forums, and think critically to differentiate facts from fiction and real from fake; to question everything they see on social media and make smart decisions. Unlike other students, business students want to master social media usage not just for connecting with family and friends, but also because it is an important literacy skill for business success in the 21st century.

Social Media also help students to collaborate and research. In some previous studies, students confirmed that social media and networking sites helped them in searching for information, completing assignments, joining educational networks and improving reading skills (Tella, 2007; Ahmed & Qazi, 2011; Mehmood & Taswir, 2013; Amin, Mansoor, Hussain & Hashmat, 2016). On the flip side, some studies reported negative impacts of social media on students' academic performance (Kubey, Lavin & Barrows 2001); Englander et al, 2010; Khan, 2009; Nalwa & Anad, 2003; Boogart, 2006). In Nigeria, researches reveal that students' excessive use of social media results in low academic achievement (Nadku, 2009; Asemah, Okpanachi & Adegoh (2013); Osharive, 2015 and Jabe, 2015). The negative impact of social media on academic performance of students can be regarded a global challenge as similar findings were made from studies conducted in Ghana (Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2015), India (Sudha & Kavitha, 2016), Pakistan (Hanain, Nasreen & Ijaz, 2015) and America (Englander, 2010). Although students claimed that social media assisted them in their studies, Young (2004) states that its negative effect on students places the resource in the role of an attractive nuisance. This is because students use social media mainly for social connectivity and not for academic purposes (Bosch, 2009; Mazman & Usluel, 2010 and Wise et al., 2011). Therefore, even though there are contrasting research regarding the impact of social media on academic performance, Englander et al (2010) was adamant that the distractive dimensions of internet use outweigh the productive dimensions.

When students fail to restrict their social media usage to reasonable time limits or unintentionally spend study time on social media, it indicates an impulse control disorder which signifies addiction. In this study, the term addiction is used interchangeably with dependence or excessive use of the internet. Addictive behavior is defined as a repetitive habit pattern that increases the risk of disease and/or associated personal and social problems" or a situation where "the behavior continues to occur despite volitional attempts

to abstain or moderate use” (Marlatt et al., 1988). The addiction of the younger generation to the internet is not a very recent development. Authors such as Brady (1996) and Murphey (1996) in Young (1996) reported internet addiction among students which resulted in academic failure. Many authors believe that internet addiction is purely a behavioral addiction just like compulsive gambling, overeating, and excessive television viewing because it does not involve exogenous substance as in the case of alcohol and drug addiction. Accordingly, Young (1996) used pathological gambling as a model to define internet addiction as impulse control disorder which does not involve an intoxicant. However, some researchers suggest that social media addiction can have a negative impact on an individual’s psychology and social life. Yuan et.al (2011) associates internet addiction disorder with structural abnormalities in the brains gray matter. Using a voxel-based morphometric technique, Yuan et al (2011) found multiple structural changes of the brain in internet-addicted subjects. They confirmed that long-term internet addiction would result in brain structural alterations. Dong et al also stated that Internet addicts share similar neuropsychological and personality characteristics with other addicts such as drug and alcohol addicts. In discussing the effects of chronic internet addiction, Yuan et al (2011) stated that it negatively affects an individual’s psychological well-being, contributing to academic failure.

Social media-addiction contributes to academic failure because it disengages learners from academic activities and makes them focus more on social activities such as chatting and sharing pictures with friends. Student engagement or engaged learning time is the amount of time students devote to learning in the classroom (Borich, 2011). Students’ disengagement therefore means that the students are not actually thinking about, working with or using what is being presented in the classroom (Jones, et al, 2007). When students are disengaged, they check their electronic devices, talk with classmates, yawn or take bathroom breaks. Students’ disengagement simply indicates boredom, which usually occurs as a result of huge gap between what learners do outside the classroom for fun and what they are expected to do while in class.

Many undergraduate business administration and business education students in universities are centennials. Many of the them have never known a world without computers and smart phones and, having used these devices from the youngest age, it is like the air that they breathe, permeating almost all areas of their lives (Fourhooks, 2015). The centennials’ affinity for technology and social media shape the way they relate and learn. Even within the classroom, the students want to socialize, connecting with people and technology; they do not just want to sit and listen to long, uninterrupted lectures. Ensuring that students in the classroom are engaged is important because they learn more when they are engaged (Pascarella and Terezini, 2005). When they are disengaged, they are bodily present in the classroom but their minds are absent. In such situations, students cannot learn because the teacher cannot impart knowledge in them given their mental absence. This has, over the years, contributed to graduation of incapable people who find it difficult to get employed or create employment for themselves.

An important task for educators, therefore, is bringing the minds of such students back into the classroom by getting them to move from civil attention to true engagement so that teaching-learning interactions can yield meaningful results. This is especially challenging for business educators who need to perform two seemingly paradoxical functions – help students to embrace electronic media including social media, PowerPoint, Excel and other tools they need and ensure that their use of the social media does not inhibit learning of

other useful contents. The investigation of how social media-addicted learners can be engaged better has not received the attention of researchers. Instead, many researchers have focused on exploring the levels of social media addiction among university students (Gazi and Caki (2017); Kempa (2015); and Kirik, et al, 2015) while others have examined the impact of social media on academic performance (for example, Ahmed and Qazi, Osharive, 2015; and Asemah et al, 2013). Across decades, however, scholars emphasised the need for empirical studies to investigate how the impact of internet and social media addiction can be managed, for example Young (1996) and Ayodele et al (2015). Yet, there has been no empirical studies to explore how social media addicted students can be assisted to fulfill their potentials in the face of this fast-growing disorder. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the instructional practices that can promote engagement of social media-addicted learners. This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the dimensions of social media addiction among students of business administration and business education in universities?
2. What instructional strategies can business educators adopt to engage social media addicted learners?

Methodology

The study used the descriptive survey method. The population for the study comprised 1208 students of business administration and business education from the University of Nigeria Nsukka and Enugu campuses, and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The population information was collected from the relevant departmental offices in February, 2018. Stratified sampling technique was used to select a total of 507 students, which represents 42%. Nwana (1992) argues that with a population of few hundreds, about 40% or more sample size would be a fair representation.

Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire had three sections – A, B and C. Section A contained 4 items on respondents' gender, age and kind of social media they utilised. Section B had 14 items adapted from Young's 1996 internet addiction scale while section 3 contained 15 researcher-generated items on teaching practices that could engage social media-addicted students. For Section 3, respondents were requested to indicate how engaging the instructional practices could be by checking (i) Highly Engaging (ii) Moderately Engaging (iii) Slightly Engaging (iv) Not Engaging. The questionnaire was face validated by 5 experts in the areas of Business Education, Business Administration and Psychology. To determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire, it was trial-tested using 32 business students at the Enugu State University of Technology. The results showed no ambiguity in the instrument and produced a Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient (for internal consistency reliability) of 0.822.

The questionnaire was administered by the researchers and 2 research assistants who were engaged to enhance timely distribution and collection of questionnaires. The research assistants were briefed on the research objectives as well as when and how to approach the subjects in order to get their cooperation. In addition, the research assistants were taught to explain the individual items on the questionnaire should the subjects require explanations. Out of the 507 students who completed the questionnaire, three hundred and eighty-one (381) copies of the questionnaire were properly completed and retrieved, representing 75% retrieval rate. Those who answered "Yes" to up to 7 or more of the items in section 2 (dimensions of social media addiction) were classified as social media dependents/addicts

while the remainder were classified as normal users. Of the 381 respondents, 275 emerged social media dependents while 106 were classified as normal users. Only the responses of the dependents/addicts were analysed to answer research questions 2 – 5.

Frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data collected. For the section three, any item with mean value between 3.50 and 4.00 were considered highly engaging while items with mean value between 2.50 and 3.49 were considered moderately engaging. On the other hand, items with mean value between 1.50 and 2.49 were considered slightly engaging while any item with mean value less than 1.50 was considered not engaging. This computation was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16.0.

Results

Demographics

The sample of dependents included 170 males and 211 females. Mean ages were 25 for males and 23 for females. 68% of the respondents were students of Business Administration while 32% were students of Business Education.

Social media used	Dependents (%)	Non-dependents (%)
Facebook	87.5	75.6
WhatsApp	82.1	80.3
Twitter	26.0	25.2
Instagram	59.0	42.4%
Others	13.4	04.0%

Table 1 shows that Facebook and WhatsApp were the most popular among students

Social media addiction among students

Table 2 shows the dimensions of social media addiction among the dependents

S.No	Items	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Do you often find yourself using social media longer than intended?	95.3	4.7
2	Does time pass by without you feeling it when you are using social media?	76.6	23.4
3	Do you get irritated when someone interrupts you when you are using social media?	68.8	31.2
4	Would you be upset if you had to cut down the amount of time you spend using social media?	57.8	42.2
5	Do you often neglect your schoolwork because of your usage of social media?	42.2	57.8
6	Do your friends or classmates frequently complain of your preoccupation with social media?	45.9	53.1
7	Do you often cancel meeting your study mates because of your occupation with social media?	26.6	73.4
8	Do you use social media while in the classroom?	40.6	59.3

9	Do you think your school grades are deteriorating because of your social media usage?	29.7	70.3
10	Do you often find life too boring without social media?	73.4	26.6
11	Do you find it difficult to sleep shortly after using social media?	29.7	70.3
12	Do you find yourself thinking about what happened in social media when you are away from them?	53.1	46.9
13	Do you feel your social media usage has increased significantly since you began using them?	82.8	17.2

Table 2 indicates that the majority of the social media addicted students use social media longer than intended and, for majority, their social media usage has increased since they began using social media.

S/No	Item	Mean	SD	Remark
<i>To engage social media dependent students, the teacher should:</i>				
1	use social media as a platform for lesson delivery.	3.30	.790	Moderately engaging
2	use social media to share information with students	3.50	.690	Highly engaging
3	ask students to send messages through social media when they get stuck in an assignment	3.44	.687	Moderately engaging
4	allow students who already understand a content to use social media while re-teaching	2.86	1.057	Moderately engaging
5	allow students to take break in the middle of a long class with online games and chatting	2.05	1.105	Slightly engaging
6	allow students to respond to very important social media messages during classes	2.28	1.076	Slightly Engaging
7	use social media as platform for question and answer sessions in the class room	2.75	1.069	Moderately engaging
8	use technology-supported teaching techniques	3.61	.657	Highly engaging
9	create student projects that combine two or more technologies	3.17	1.121	Moderately engaging
10	ask students to use technology in accomplishing tasks	3.31	.710	Moderately engaging
11	give students assignments that involve use of social media	3.19	.833	Moderately engaging
12	use social media languages in the classroom	2.63	.968	Moderately engaging
13	Organise instruction around ideas that students know something about so that they can contribute to discussion.	3.32	.900	Moderately engaging
14	Give students assignments group work	3.57	1.001	Highly engaging
15	use instructional methods that give students opportunity to connect with each other and share experiences and knowledge	3.67	.865	Highly engaging
16	use games in teaching	2.70	.987	Moderately engaging
17	use instructional techniques that involve role play	3.34	.695	Moderately engaging

18	ban students from using social media in the classroom	2.77	1.035	Moderately engaging
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Discussion

The finding that *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* were the most popular social media applications among the respondents was expected because *Facebook* is arguably the most popular social media site in the world (Mazman&Usluel (2010) with over 1 billion users worldwide. The finding is consistent with the findings of Irwin, Ball, Desbrow and Leveritt (2012), Asemah et al (2013) and Dwamena, et al(2015) and aligns with the idea that majority of undergraduate students at university or college use *Facebook* on a daily basis (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Madge, Meek, Wellens & Hooley, 2009; Ophus & Abbitt, 2009; Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman & Witty, 2010; Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter & Espinoza, 2008; Wise, Skues & Williams, 2011; Wolfe, 2007). This finding is not consistent with the findings of a study conducted by the National Center for Generational Kinetics and Dorcey (2016) Which revealed that Centennials in America are moving away from the traditional social media such as facebook to other platforms that fits them better and have less usage by their parents such as Vine, Instagram and Twitter.

The less popular dimensions of the social media addiction (less than 30%) include canceling meetings with study mates because of social media usage, finding it difficult to sleep after social media usage and deteriorating school grades because of social media usage. This result indicates that social media usage does not impair the academic performance of majority of the students (to the best of the students' knowledge). The finding that students' school grades did not deteriorate as a result of social media usage agrees with Anderson (2001) who found that only a small group of students use the internet to a degree that affects other tasks in their life. However, while it is important to be open to the idea of flexibility about the impact of social media on academic achievement, the author remains concerned about the opposing research evidence that students who spend a lot of time on social media have lower grades. Particularly, Karpinski (2009) who studied Facebook users found that CGPAs ranged 3.5 - 4.0 for non-users but ranged 3.0 - 3.5 for users. Beyond research evidence, given that students spend the time they could have spent studying on social media, academic achievement will naturally be reduced. It could be argued that only when students use the social media more for academic purposes will it yield positive outcomes in their academic achievement but authors such as Mazman & Usluel (2010) and Wise et al. (2011) found that students use social media more for social connections and not for academic purposes.

Results indicate that students who were social media addicted agreed that strategies that allow students to use social media privately in the class were only slightly engaging. However, they agreed that they would be moderately engaged if teachers use social media to teach and manage question and answer sessions. These findings indicate students want to use social media as a platform to interact with real people in the classroom and not necessarily those outside the classroom.

Implications of findings for Business Educators

Integrating technology. Business educators need to integrate new technologies into business education and business administration curriculum implementation to effectively

educate students. Teachers need to seek knowledge about technologies and media and develop a positive disposition and favourable beliefs about the use of technology in teaching – learning processes. These are important first steps in technology integration since a business educator cannot integrate technology if knowledge is lacking and disposition is unfavourable. Teachers also need to keep abreast of changes not only in educational technology but also in technologies for communication and collaboration, especially the ones that students bring to school.

Creating Collaborative Classrooms. Collaborative classrooms where students feel free and safe to share their experiences and whatever they know about a topic presented is an important pedagogical consideration. As findings suggest that dependents need to be doing something that connect them with their classmates and teachers, it is important that business educators build capacity to create and manage interactive environments where learners connect with each other. This environment is similar to the kind of classroom described by Levy (2000) where everybody knows something, no one knows everything and what any one person knows can be tapped by the group as a whole. Moreover, in classrooms where people are being trained to become successful business educators, employees or entrepreneurs, collaborative problem-solving and construction of knowledge should be valued above working in isolation.

Role of the teacher. The findings of the study as well as the above implications call for a fundamental rethinking of the role of the teacher in business classrooms. Teachers need to play their traditional role of facilitating learning but they now need to ensure that their role includes, as Gordon describes, less “sage on the stage”. Instead their role should involve more of thought leadership and guidance where they focus on harnessing intelligent contributions and moderating and organizing knowledge sharing and distribution. Teachers should help learners become discerning and confident users of the media and technology, participating effectively in forums, and develop critical thinking abilities.

Conclusion

Majority of the business students studied are social media-addicted with no interest in becoming less addicted. This challenges business educators to embrace essential pedagogical and technological change in order to engage the social media addicted students and help them fulfill their potentials. Business educators need to adopt appropriate technology and media as well as use teaching techniques that allow students to share their knowledge and experiences. These require the teachers to improve themselves beginning from having the right disposition to acquiring skills that will enable them teach and assess social media-addicted students.

Recommendations

1. *Managing classroom participation.* Students’ increasing quest for sharing ideas and contributing to classroom discussions calls on teachers to develop and continue to improve capacity to manage students’ participations in classroom discussions. Business educators can improve themselves by studying and practicing techniques for managing participation of students including managing students who are experts in topics of discussion and cold-calling patterns and techniques that students will perceive as fair and respectful

2. Business educators need to increase the depth and width of their knowledge base by reading and listening to business issues beyond their narrow areas of specialization. Business subjects (Strategy, Marketing, accounting, finance, leadership and management of people, processes and projects) are closely related and interdependent. Thus, in classrooms where participants are genuinely free to share ideas and experiences, discussions can flow across multiple disciplines. In situations like this, teachers who have wide-enough knowledge base remain confident thought leaders in the classroom while those who are not knowledgeable about the topic of discussion would have to reposition themselves. While it is not out of place for students to know more than their teachers on some topics, frequent occurrence of such situations could lead a teacher to lose confidence, since knowledge is the key source of confidence. It could further make the teacher lose control of the class discussion and, in some cases, lose genuine respect from students.
3. *Developing collaboration Skills:* Business Educators need develop the skills for teaching and assessing students' collaborative skills. Teachers who do not have collaborative skills must first develop the skills themselves before they can teach and assess students' skills in this area.
4. *Provision of technological devices:* Business departments in Universities need to devise avenues for increasing funding for the promotion of equitable access to necessary technical equipment and the internet. These include avenues such as rendering consultancy services and training programmes, seeking partnerships with private and non-governmental agencies and applying for grants. Over-reliance on government support may not yield the needed result.

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Respondents also agreed that teaching practices that give students opportunity to discuss and share their ideas in the classroom were highly engaging. These findings align with the predictions made by the State of New South Wales (2010) that collective intelligence involving the pooling of knowledge and sharing of common goals and problem solving will be at the core of classroom practices.