GHANA TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE



BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MANAGEMENT)

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING;

(THE CASE OF GHANA TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

* 1. BACKGROUND

Social media can be said to be a website or application that enables users to create and share content or participate in social networking. It provides a platform which allows students to build communities in order to collaborate with each other, share ideas, and facilitate the learning process by providing easily accessible material which may be vital to student’s academia. In today’s era of modern technology, telecommunication has had its fair share of development, transforming the entire world into “a Global Village” through easily accessible means of connectivity through social media like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. These networking sites are used by most people to interact with old and new friends, physical or internet friends. Asemah and Edegoh (2012).

Learning is simply the accumulation of knowledge and in this case accumulating knowledge through the facilitation of the social media platform for both personal and academic use. Student productivity, information access, problem solving, communication and collaborations are some of the skills that can be learnt or developed through the use of social media.

Over the last few years, the Internet has had a profound effect on the private and professional lives of people across the globe, students are not an exception, offering them an increasing number and range of opportunities for accessing information, gaining and exchanging knowledge and realizing personal and academic learning goals.

Social media is popular amongst students in the university and plays a variety of roles in education as a medium for collaboration and sharing of ideas, to facilitate learning and enhance learning abilities as highlighted by Al-khaifa and Garcia (2013). It is one of the most popular methods for communication amongst university students in Ghana. Social media applications provide easy, fast and efficient ways to access a great diversity of information and situated knowledge. They also provide learners with opportunities to develop their competences in collaboration with other learners, such as lecturers, practitioners and stakeholders. Additionally, they allow individuals to acquire competences in a holistic manner, embedded in real-life contexts; and effectively and efficiently support competence building in a lifelong learning continuum. However, there are also downsides to social media being used for learning, such as the distraction of it due to its ability to be used for entertainment purposes. This research will explore this by conducting a study on university students in Ghana Technology University College (GTUC), in regards to social media and its usage as a tool for learning.

Studies such as Aloundeth Panekham (2014) Christine Redecker, Kirsti Ala-Mutka and Yves Punie, Junco et al. (2011), Camilia et al (2013), and Jeffery Mingle (2015) have explored the use of social media by students for learning purposes, ability to engage and the effect on their lives, in countries such as USA, Pakistan, Nigeria and Ghana.

Junco et al. (2011) explored the impact of Twitter usage for educational purposes on college student engagement and learning in the USA. Results indicated that Twitter can engage students by being used as an educational tool and to facilitate a more active role in which teaching staff can participate.

Camilia et al. (2013) looked into the role of social media in Nigerian students’ studies by distributing a survey. The study found that although students frequently used social media it was rarely for learning purposes. Tariq et al (2012) focused on the impact of social media, on the education of Pakistani students as well as the impact on their lives. The research concluded that the use of social media by students could ruin their lives as well as have a bad impact on their education. Social media diverts the attention and concentration of students towards activities which are not educational and time wasting such as chatting on non-educational topics.

The evaluation of the outcome of the study are based on several parameters such as; what social media is, what it means to learn via social media, the relationship between social media and its use for learning, the number of hours used on social media based on the information retrieved from the students and the most popular social media platform used by students.

Also, this research study will explore the most commonly used social media platforms, the average amount of time being spent by students on social media, the channels for accessing these social media platforms, the educational aspect of social media, as well as the risks that social media brings. This study will also make recommendations to students if necessary.

The social media tools under consideration for this study are;

(1) Media sharing sites (YouTube)

(2) Social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn)

(3) Social bookmarking (Pinterest)

(4) Internet messaging (Google Hangout, Skype, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger)

(5) Content creation and publishing tools (Wikis and blogs)

Our research study will also highlight other key factors besides social media which serve as tools that can be used for learning.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Students have become fully involved in social networking and therefore excessive social media use can raise questions about whether academic studies are affected. Tynes, (2009) confirmed that parents are very worried because of their teens’ habitual use of social media sites which causes them to abandon their academic activities. He observed that 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. In as much as these actions may seem crucial it will be more justifiable if research has been conducted as to the learning aspects of social media and carefully examined to uncover whether it is indeed used more for noneducational purposes or for learning in the case of students.

Some researchers have already stressed a lot of importance of using social network by the youths and many others have also explored on the negative impacts of social media on behavior of the youths.

Ndaku (2013) stated that investigations and interviews with some teachers and students revealed a number of challenges in relation to student’s participation on social media networks. These included a high addiction rate among students which affects their time of study, the wrong usage of grammar and spelling in social media discourse as well as distracting students from their studies. He discovered that students spend a lot of time on social networking sites than in their academic activities and this affects their academic performance.

Therefore, this research hopes to fill these gaps of knowledge.

* 1. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1.3.1 Main Objective:

To explore the extent to which social media can be used as a tool to facilitate learning.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives:

1. To find out whether social media use enhances or diminishes students’ learning experience

1. To identify the type of social media platform popularly used by students.
2. To identify the type of social media platform popularly used by lecturers.
3. To discover how much time students spend on social media for learning / academic purposes.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does social media use enhance or diminish students’ learning experience?

1. How does lecturer’s choice and use of social media compare to students’ choice?
2. Is class-related communication improved by using social media?
3. Can social media contribute positively to students’ academic performance?

1. What factors besides social media serve as tools that can be used by students for learning?
2. How do social media choices and communication between students and lecturers affect the student learning experience?

1.5 SCOPE OF STUDY:

This research will focus primarily on the extent to which social media is used as a tool for learning by undergraduate students. Similar studies have been done in foreign countries, but this work seeks to study this modern learning technique in the Ghanaian educational context.

Limitation

CWA of respondents needed to correlate

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Most students are more aware of the entertainment aspect of social media than the aspect that facilitates learning. This research will provide extensive information concerning the extent to which social media can be used as a tool for learning and which platform most effectively serves this purpose. The information will be valuable to teachers, parents, students and even the school administration of GTUC, as suggestions will be made on how to encourage students to improve upon this aspect of social media use. The research will also seek to determine the causes of social media addiction, if any.

Also, other factors besides social media which serve as tools that can be used by students for learning will be determined and made known.

This research will begin by presenting a literature review. It will then present methodology to be used in analyzing the data. Thirdly present the findings of the research, which describes or gives a better understanding on how social media is used by students as a tool for learning. Lastly it shows directions for future research as well as limitation of study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Uses and Gratification Theory

This theory is the mostly widely used theory for understanding why and how people actively seek out, choose, use, adopt specific media to satisfy specific needs. (Katz, 1954) The theory explains reasons why certain social media was chosen over alternative communication media and the motivators that influence particular media behavior to occur. (Brandtzæg & Heim, 2009; Cheung Et al., 2011) According to the Uses and Gratification theory the use of certain media are driven by certain goals and need of users. This theory assumes that users are not passive consumers of media but that the media use is goal oriented and thus competes against other information sources for viewer’s gratification.

The internet provides a new and deep field for exploring Uses and Gratification theory. It was found to have three main gratification, process gratification, and social gratification.

* Content: Uses for the Internet include the need for researching or finding specific information or material, which are gratified with content.
* Process: Users gain gratification from the experience of purposeful navigating or random browsing of the Internet in its functional process.
* Social: Uses encompass a wide range of forming and deepening social ties.

This motivational reason for using social networking can be used to get a better understanding of why students decide to use or not to use social media for learning.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives us details about research method. It includes; Research Design, Research Approach, Ethical Consideration, Population of Study, Sample Size and Sampling Technique, Validity of the Instrument, Reliability of the Instrument, Data Collection Method and Data Analysis Technique.

3.2 Research Design

This study will take the form of a Descriptive research. This design has been considered because it allows the researcher to generate data through the standardized collection procedures based on highly structured research instrument(s) and well defined study concepts and related variables. In order to answer the research questions proposed by this study, both quantitative and qualitative research method will be used. Where quantitative research method emphasizes on objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical or a number of analyzed data collected through polls, questionnaires and surveys. A qualitative research method aims to make sense out of a specific role group interaction or social situation. Locke Spirduso & Silverman (2007). Also, Miles and Huberman (1984) describes qualitative research as a process of investigating that allows researchers to contrast, compare, replicate, catalogue, and classify the studied participants in order to gradually understand a certain social phenomenon. Specifically, a correlational research design will be used to address the research questions proposed. Correlational research designs are typically used to find relationships between variables using a single study population. It can also be used to find patterns that may exist between the variables (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2007).

3.3 Research Approach

This research investigates the role of social media in students learning experience, which in recent times has become an emerging topic; therefore, this research is also explanatory in nature. And its aim is to explore this new idea from the view point of participant (lecturer and students), the qualitative research method will be the most appropriate method for this research because by its very nature, it allows the research to develop a more realistic understanding of the topic. This provides a better understanding of behavioral and psychological issues and important for answering the question of “how “and “why” concerning the use of social media as a tool for learning in other to enhance students learning experience and improve peer to peer communications.

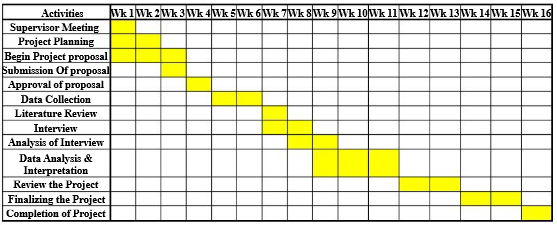
3.4 Ethical Consideration

In accordance with the human ethics process Ghana Technology University College, the data collection commenced after the approval from the university. The interviews run from… to …. All the interviewees were provided with participant information sheet which describes the objective of research, assured participants of the confidentiality of their responses.

Time Schedule

Our research is expected to take about 16 weeks or 4 months, beginning from the first day of meeting our supervisor (14 September) to the expected day of completion (14 January ).

This schedule is depicted in the Gantt’s chart below;



3.5 Population Of Study

The Population for this study will be undergraduate students in Ghana Technology University College. The total population comprised of about 3,000 undergraduate full time students. Out of which the accessible population is level 400 IT-Business students.

3.6 Sample Size And Sampling Technique

The sample will consist of 110 students, from level 400. Participants will be picked randomly, from different faculties and possibly also different nationality since sampling will be done using the Simple Random Technique.

**This type of sampling technique** is the purest form of probability sampling therefore each member of the population will have an equal and known chance of being selected.

3.7 Research Instruments

Data collection instruments to be used for the research include Questionnaires and Interviews. A well-constructed and self-developed questionnaire titled “Social Media as a Tool for learning (SMAAT)” will be used to get the desired information from the students. The questionnaire is divided into two sections (A and B). Section A is for collection of information on personal data of respondents while Section B consists of questions that elicit responses from the respondents with response options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The type of interview used will be structured interviews.

3.8 Validity Of The Instrument

The intended questionnaire will be submitted to the project supervisor for inspection, correction and endorsement before distributing it to the respondents.

3.9 Source Of Data

The source of data for this research will be primary data; this is because data will be collected directly from the participants of the survey. Primary data will be advantageous for our research since the data to be acquired will be specifically tailed for our research, but the downside is that it may be time consuming and more expensive as compared to acquiring secondary data.

3.10 Data Analysis Techniques

This study follows a quantitative research design; therefore, all data analysis methods must be quantitative. Correlation analysis will be used in order to check the strength of the relationship between the various variables like Social media usage and time spent on learning as against time spent on entertainment usage of social media as well as CWA scores as done by Esam Alwagaita, Basit Shahzada, Sophia Ali (2014) in a similar study. Also, variables like hours spent on social media will be compared with hours spent studying.

The statistical software SPSS will be used to determine whether there is a relationship between the variables and how strong this relationship may be.