Towards Perception and Usage of Social Networking Sites among Students in the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

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Abstract

This study explored the perceptions and usage of Social Networking Sites (SNS) among tertiary communication students. It specifically investigated students' perceptions about Social Media, their most preferred SNS and the uses of social media among students. This study sought to determine the relationship between perception of social media and frequency of use of social media among young communication students in the Ghana Institute of Journalism, Accra. Theories underpinning the study are the Community of Inquiry model, Social Cognitive Theory, and the Uses and Gratification theory. The study adopted a Random Stratified sampling technique to respond to three hypothetical issues: 1. That Students' frequency in using social networking sites will not significantly relate to their research and learning; 2. That there is no significant relationship between frequency of using social networking sites and effective advertising of goods and services; 3. That there is a significant relationship between student perception of Social Networking Sites and frequency of use. The study revealed that students perceived social media as an interesting tool useful for research and learning and concluded that communication students enjoy using social media but the use of the platforms for learning is limited. SNS was also perceived as a relevant tool for advertising and stimulating sales.

Keywords: Perception, Usage, Social Networking Sites, Students, Frequency.

Abstrait

Cette étude a exploré les perceptions et l'utilisation des sites de réseautage social (SNS) parmi les étudiants en communication de l'enseignement supérieur. Il a spécifiquement étudié les perceptions des étudiants sur les médias sociaux, leurs SNS préférés et les utilisations des médias sociaux par les étudiants. Cette étude visait à déterminer la relation entre la perception des médias sociaux et la fréquence d'utilisation des médias sociaux chez les jeunes étudiants en communication de l'Institut ghanéen de Journalisme d'Accra. Les théories qui sous-tendent l'étude sont le Modèle de Communauté d'Enquête, la Théorie Cognitive Sociale et la Théorie des Utilisations et de la Gratification. L'étude a adopté la technique d'échantillonnage Stratifié Aléatoire pour répondre à trois questions hypothétiques : 1. La fréquence d'utilisation des sites de réseaux sociaux par les étudiants n'aura pas de rapport significatif avec leur recherche et leur apprentissage ; 2. Qu'il n'y a pas de relation significative entre la fréquence d'utilisation des sites de réseaux sociaux et la publicité efficace des biens et services ; 3. Qu'il existe une relation significative entre la perception par les étudiants des sites de réseautage social et la fréquence d'utilisation. L'étude a révélé que les étudiants percevaient les médias sociaux comme un outil intéressant utile pour la recherche et l'apprentissage et a conclu que les étudiants en communication aiment utiliser les médias sociaux, mais que l'utilisation des plateformes d'apprentissage est limitée. Le SNS était également perçu comme un outil pertinent pour la publicité et la stimulation des ventes.
Mots-clés: Perception, Utilisation, Sites de Réseautage Social, Etudiants, fréquence

Introduction

The usage of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) has become a common phenomenon in recent times. These sites are internet-based tools that facilitate communication and exchange of content in diverse ways due to globalization and advancement in technology. From the days of sixdegrees.com which was in 1997 (Boyd et al, 2007). SNSs have evolved with even much more complex uses and grown to engulf the world, especially after the inception of Facebook in early 2004, now the largest SNS in terms of the user base (Staticbrain.com, 2016).

Social Networking began in 1978 with the Bulletin Board System (BBS). The BBS was hosted on personal computers which required that

users dial in through the modem of the host computer and subsequently exchange information over the phone lines with other users at the other end (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). It appears that, historically, this was the very first system that created the platform for users to sign in and then be able to interact with each other.

The problem statement for this study is that the usage of SNSs has been of great importance to the lives of students. Students are getting more connected than before, making new friends, getting informed on issues, getting educated, and on the urge to stand up against systems or structures of power. Kuss & Griffiths (2011) examined the usage and implications for using SNS among college students. The results of the study revealed that female students spent more time on SNSs as compared to male students. However, there are some issues of interest which need attention. These range from time wastage, privacy, to reliance on the internet and the loss of emotional and physical bonding.

The objectives of the study are three-fold; first, to determine the relationship between student perception of social networking sites and frequency of use among communication students.; secondly, to investigate the positive and negative impact of SNS on tertiary communication students in the Ghana Institute of Journalism and thirdly, to investigate students' perceptions about SNS and the varying uses of social media among students.

Research questions for this study include; What is the relationship between student perception of SNS and frequency of use among communication students? How does the frequency in using social networking sites relate to research and learning? What is the relationship between the frequency in using SNS and effective advertising of goods and services among communication students?

The purpose of this study was to discover and ascertain the significance of student perceptions and usage of social networking sites and the extent to which SNSs could be an effective resource to communicate students, whiles inventors consider the emerging issues/results emanating from the study, to make SNSs more resourceful.

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Popular social media platforms

There are several social media sites, however, some have gained wide
usage than others. Some of the most popular social media are briefly
described in this section.

Facebook: This is arguably the most popular social media platform
around the world. Facebook is a social networking site where users can
set up a profile, create formal connections with people they know,
communicate, and share preferences and interests. Facebook's fastest-
growing demographic is users over the 25years, however many active
Facebook users are youthful millennials. Facebook was established in
2004 and is based in Menlo Park, California. This social medium has
more than 1.94 billion monthly active users as of March 2017 (Chaffey,
2016; Stelzner, 2016). **Instagram:** this is also a free photo and video
sharing app that allows users to apply digital filters, frames, and special
effects to their photos and then share them on a variety of social
networking sites. After its launch in 2010, Instagram rapidly gained
popularity, with one million registered users in two months, 10 million
in a year. Instagram is owned by Facebook (Chaffey, 2016; Stelzner,
2016). **Snapchat:** This is a mobile app that lets users send photos and
videos to friends or their "story." Snaps disappear after viewing or after
24 hours. Snapchat currently has over 100 million daily active users.
The company was founded in 2011 and is now registered as Snap Inc.
(Stelzner, 2016). **Twitter:** This social media is a cross between instant
messaging and blogging that allows users to send short (140-character)
updates. Users can also follow the updates of selected friends. Twitter
launched in 2006 in California, where the company is still based. In
2012, more than 100 million users posted 340 million tweets a day, and
the service handled an average of 1.6 billion search queries per day
(Chaffey, 2016). **YouTube:** This is an online video site owned by
Google Inc. Videos are uploaded by users and can be viewed for free.
Users can leave comments on video pages. YouTube was founded in
2005 as a private company but was acquired by Google the following
year (Chaffey, 2016).

It is worth noting that these social media sites keep evolving and
students are not oblivious of the new updates, upgrades, and trends that
are frequently emerging; which continue to stimulate students and other
users to continue to patronize these dynamic sites.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

In its early days, social media was quite slow as only one user could be
logged in at a time. Consequently, the very first copies of web browsers
were distributed using the bulletin board Usenet (Boyd and Ellison,
2007). Also, the first social uses of the World Wide Web evolved when
tools including Listser (a discussion software) were used to connect
people around the world who shared common interests (Boyd and
Ellison, 2007).

The historical antecedents of SNS give a clear indication that priorities
then hinged on the need for people to be able to post articles, news, or
posts which was referred to as "news", as well as create the avenue for
people to engage in forum discussions online; a phenomenon which has
become imperative in educational technology. These facilities and
features for teaching and learning, in recent times, have been integrated
into Learning Management Systems known as MOODLES, Wikis, and
Blogs, among others. Thereby, enabling students, especially
communication students to engage in knowledge and content sharing.
This is relevant to this study because part of the objectives of this study
was to determine the role of social networking sites for research and
learning as well as the frequency of use of such medium for improving
communication/writing skills. A vast number of University students
make use of social media especially because they can identify
themselves with the engaging nature of the social media phenomenon.

In their study which sought to investigate the pedagogical affordance of
social media and its relationship with student engagement, Hassan and
Landani (2015) realized several findings. They rightfully argue that the
advancement of internet-based mobile technology and new operating
systems have brought about a new wave of social communications. In
contextualizing the whole phenomenon of social media, Qualman,
(2009), established that, when it comes to social media, it doesn't
recognize any time or space limits and that user-generated content is
distributed and disseminated across the borders and time zones within
seconds of it being posted online.

Nnaka(2016), explored the perceptions and usage of social networking
sites among distance learning students in Nigeria. The objectives of the

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study were to examine students' perception of SNS, determine the various categories of SNS used by distance learning students, establish the frequency of use of SNS by the students. After randomly sampling 400 students, Nnaka discovered that students used SNS mainly to stay in touch and connect with family and friends. However, students were not oblivious of the educational uses of social media as they considered it an interesting platform for achieving academic excellence. Bhattacherjee, (2012) in his study also discovered some negative effects of the use of social media by students at the university of Siliguri, such as exposure to unwanted contacts, abusive messages, harassment, stalking, bullying, easy access to personal information, and the time-consuming nature of social media. Blachnio et al. (2018), also indicate that students at the university participate in virtual conversations and also answer messages even when they are found in appropriate circumstances and they also get pathologically engaged in these activities. Subsequently, this results in poor academic performance, insomnia, distress, anxiety, lack of focus, disrupted eating habits, excessive fatigue, and diminished real-life social interactions

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in the Community of Inquiry (CoI) model which is a social constructivist model of learning processes in online and blended educational environments. The framework is built upon three dimensions: **Teaching presence** is defined as the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the realization of meaningful learning. **Social presence** refers to the ability to perceive others in an online environment as "real" and the projection of oneself as a real person. **Cognitive presence** is the extent to which learners can construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse. Research has shown that there is a relationship between the three presences and students' perceived learning, satisfaction with the course, satisfaction with the instructor, actual learning, and sense of belonging (Akyol & Garrison, 2008; Arbaugh, 2008; Richardson, et. al., 2017)

The Uses and Gratifications theory came most prominently to the fore in the late 1950s and early 1960s at a time of widespread disappointment with the outcome of attempts to measure the short-term effects of exposure to mass media campaigns. It reflected a desire to understand audience involvement in mass communications in terms more faithful to

the individual user's own experience and perspective than the effects
tradition could attain (Livingstone, 1998). This study takes the view that
social media for instance invites more audience activity than traditional
media. During media consumption, activity might be indexed by the
degree of attention paid to the output consumer or by the ability to recall
what is included. **Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)** has been applied in a
wide variety of spheres including social media usage. It provides a well-
supported conceptual framework for understanding the factors
influencing human behaviour and the processes through which learning
occurs. Under the theory, behaviour, cognition, and other personal and
environmental factors operate as interacting determinants of each other.
Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is a learning theory that states that
people learn by observing and imitating others and by positive
reinforcement. SCT posits that behavioural change is affected not only
by personal factors and internal dispositions but also by environmental
influences.

According to Bandura, (2005), self-efficacy is the most important
characteristic that changes human behaviour. Self-efficacy is the extent
or strength of one's belief in his willingness and ability to complete tasks
and reach goals. Individuals with high self-efficacy have a high
expectation that the outcomes or consequences of the tasks they perform
must be effective, valuable, and beneficial to them, and they believe that
they can exhibit such behaviour. Self-efficacy is not only influenced by
the individual's capability, but also by other people around who may
have a positive or negative attitudes towards a specific behaviour
(Bandura, 2005). The social cognitive theory applies to this study
because conversations through SNS are very similar to traditional face-
to-face conversations.

Methodology
The descriptive survey design used for this study involved a cross-
sectional survey of Students of the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ)
to collect information relating to the variables of the study. This
approach and design were suitable because of the need to collect large
amounts of data on different variables, mainly students' perceptions and
usage of Social Networking Sites (SNS). The population for this is the
entire level 400 Public Relations and Journalism students of the 2018-
2019 academic year of the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ).

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Selecting this group of students was based on purposive sampling due to the rank of the respondents and also by virtue of long and sustained exposure to the patronage of SNS, as communication students, over a period of four years.

In all a sample size of **667 students** was selected adopting the Random Stratified sampling method. Stratified sampling was ideal because stratification leads to reduced sampling error, the strategy also ensured that all relevant portions of the population are included in the sample. This technique was used to select a representation of undergraduates from two different level 400 student groups of GIJ, namely level 400 regular students and then level 400 Top-up weekend students in both the Public Relations and Journalism Faculties. Stratified sampling entails selecting several respondents from different groups or strata to ensure that the final sample has a representation of all groups (Creswell, 2014). Primary data for this study was sourced from respondents using structured questionnaires.

Validity and Reliability
Ensuring the validity and reliability of the study was inevitable as data collection had to follow a rigorous process of piloting and pre-testing. The questionnaires were structured with scales of measurements to test perceptions, usage, challenges, and frequent use vis-à-vis the hypotheses. Therefore, scales of measurement were specifically designed based on previous studies (Petrick, 2002; Yadav and Rahman, 2017; Cho, 2013). Each scale consisted of several definite statements that respondents had as options in one scale or another, within which options were provided in ordinal scale and interval scales (in a 5-point Likert scale). Pre-testing was done with a cross-section of students (N20) to test the validity and reliability of the questions and also refine some questions; to avoid respondent biases and researcher biases. The questionnaire was also piloted among some senior lecturers within the university (N5), to ensure a more robust questionnaire. **The reliability** of the data was tested using the SPSS Crombach Alpha statistical instrument to determine the reliability co-efficient of data collected and analysed. The acceptable value (alpha or co-efficient) by Crombach should be >= 0.70, however, for less than ten items, the acceptable value is <0.5. A reliability coefficient of 0.918 which is >0.70, was attained for this study, after running the test for 30 items, as presented in the table below.

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
75.61	760.779	27.582	30	**0.918**

Findings

The results of the study indicated that the respondents consisted of 58.9% females and 41.1% males of all respondents and this did not in any way moderate the study or any of the variables of the study. Issues emanating from the results are categorised as follows;

i.   Social Networking Sites (SNS) respondents use daily

Social Networking Sites that respondents used daily were Facebook, represented by 91.2%, followed by 5.5% using Twitter, 1.8% using YouTube, 1.0% using WhatsApp, and 0.4% using Instagram. Generally, 45.0% of respondents assert daily patronage of SNS. A greater number of respondents (45%) spent a minimum of 30 minutes on Social Media per visit. It is worth noting that a high majority of the respondents prefer to use Facebook daily, more than any other SNS, as well as spend on average, 30 minutes on Social media per visit.

ii.   Purposes for using Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Respondents use Social Networking Sites (SNS) for various purposes as shown in Table 1. Which indicates that SNS was used purposely for *Chats (instant messaging - 70.6%)*.

Table1: Purposes for using Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Options	Frequency	Percent
Chats (instant messaging)	**471**	**70.6**
Research and learning purposes	**111**	**16.6**
Updating profile information	12	1.8

iii.   Perceptions of Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Table 2 revealed the perceptions of Social Networking Sites (SNS) use by respondents. These perceptions of SNS revealed several constructs such as '*Interesting*' (41.8%). Generally, the majority of respondents perceived SNS to be 'Interesting' mediums.

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Table 2: Perceptions of Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Options	Frequency	Percent
Social networking sites are _interesting_	**279**	**41.8**
Social networking sites reduce study time	85	12.7
Social networking sites facilitate research and learning	197	29.5

iv. Perceptions of using Social Networking Sites (SNS) for advertising and sales

Respondents' perceptions of using Social Networking Sites (SNS) for advertising are indicated in Table 3. According to the results, the perceptions of using Social Networking Sites (SNS) for advertising revealed that '_stimulate sales' (36.9%)_ is the prime perception for advertising online.

Options	Frequency	Percent
To stimulate sales	**246**	**36.9**
Create awareness about student start-up businesses	155	23.2
Enquire about a product or a service	109	16.3
Promote individual/product/service	98	14.7

v. Effects of Social Networking Sites (SNS) on communication students

The effects of social networking sites (SNS) on communication students are revealed in Table 4. _Improved communication skills (54.0%),_ followed by others. This is quite impressive because a little over half of the respondents perceive SNS as a resource that improves the communication skills of an individual while patronizing them. While setting up the scale of measurement to test effectiveness, this researcher anticipated that 'SNS is Addictive' will be perceived highly by students. However, the results prove that it did not so turn out; polling only 6.6%, which is woefully inadequate to justify the general perception that SNS is addictive.

Table 4: Effects of social networking sites (SNS) on communication with students

Options	Frequency	Percent
Improved communication skills	360	54.0
Poor writing skills	116	17.4
Good writing skills	19	2.8
Facilitates academic conversations	51	7.6
Takes away productive time	65	9.7
SNS is Addictive	44	6.6

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vi. How communication students have been affected by Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Bar chart 1, revealed how respondents were affected by Social Networking Sites (SNS). Most of the respondents (43%) indicated that they have experienced '*Identity theft*'. The other effects of Social Networking Sites (SNS) were '*Stalking*' (32.7%), '*Blackmail*' (6.9%), and '*Bullying*' (4.9%). Inventors of SNSs, such as Facebook, must, therefore, consider these sensitive issues that tend to occur on their networks through individual users, online groups, and communities; and ensure that the identity of users is secured, devoid of abuse and identity theft. Issues related to Stalking, Bullying, and Blackmail, must be seriously curtailed to alleviate the growing fears and perceptions of students, lest they reject the use of Social Networking Sites.

Bar Chart 1: How communication students have been affected by Social Networking Sites (SNS)
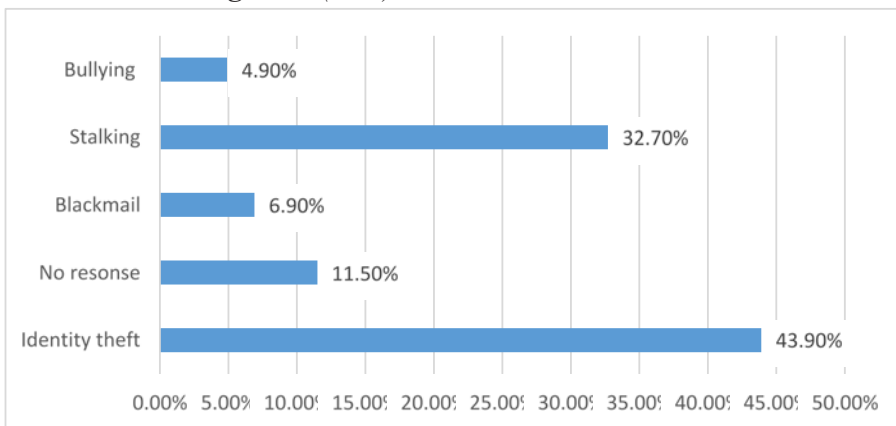
vii. Social Networking Sites Facilitates Research and Learning

Responses on whether social networking sites facilitate research and learning in the university environment are shown in Table 5; indicating that most of the respondents representing 39.0% agreed, and 29.4% strongly agreed respectively. This equates to a significant 68.4% agreement on SNS as a facilitator of research and learning. No indication was given by the students as to how this occurs. However, in recent times it has become imperative for instruction, in diverse forms, to be conducted online through SNSs, and more and more marketers,

advertisers, teachers, coaches, and instructors are using SNSs to offer training and educational development. It is, therefore, not surprising that students have over time, developed the perception or impression that SNSs facilitate research and learning.

Table 5: Social Networking Sites facilitates research and learning

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	**196**	**29.4**
Agree	**260**	**39.0**
Neutral	88	13.2
Disagree	14	2.1
Strongly disagree	109	16.3
Total	667	100.0

viii. Social networking sites are effective tools for the advertising goods and services

The research quizzed respondents on whether SNS were effective tools for the advertising goods and services. Most (41.2%) strongly agreed with this fact, followed by 25.5% agreed. This equates to a significant 66.7% agreement, indicating that social networking sites are effective tools for advertising goods and services. No indication was given by the students as to how this occurs. However, in recent times it has become imperative for advertising and promotion, in diverse forms, to be conducted online through SNSs, and more and more marketers, start-up businesses, and organisations are using SNSs to offer sales promotions that rapidly sensitize, stimulate and persuade consumers to conveniently purchase goods and services online. It is, therefore, not surprising that students have over time, developed the perception or impression that SNSs are effective tools for advertising goods and services.

Table 6: Social networking sites are effective tools for the advertising goods and services

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	**275**	**41.2**
Agree	**170**	**25.5**
Neutral	34	5.1
Disagree	8	1.2
Strongly disagree	180	27.0
Total	667	100.0

ix.   *Hypothesis Testing*

H1: Students' frequency in using social networking sites will not significantly relate to their research and learning at the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

It was evidenced in Table 8 that there is no significant relationship between frequency in using SNS and research and learning. The chi-square value of 2.589, df = 4, p-value = 0.629 shows this. So any high proportion among them was by chance. Since the null hypothesis is not supported. Students' frequent use of SNS about their research and learning is insignificant, at the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

Table 8: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	**df**	**P-value**
Pearson Chi-Square	2.589	4	0.629
Likelihood Ratio	2.569	4	0.632
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.839	1	0.36
N of Valid Cases	637		

H2: There is no significant relationship between frequency in using SNS and effective advertising of goods and services. It was evidenced in Table 10 that there is a significant relationship between frequency in using SNS and effective advertising of goods and services among students. The chi-square value of 10.667, df = 4, p-value = 0.031 shows this.

Table 10**: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	**df**	**P-value**
Pearson Chi-Square	10.667	4	0.031
Likelihood Ratio	10.753	4	0.029
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.173	1	0.075
N of Valid Cases	637		

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H3: There is no significant relationship between perception of social
networking sites and frequency of use among students. It was
evidenced from Table 12 that there is a significant relationship between
perception of social networking sites and frequency of use of SNS
among students. The chi-square value of 5.368, df = 4, p-value = 0.025
shows this. Therefore, the assertion that there is a significant
relationship between perception of SNS and frequency of use among
students is significant and supported.

Table 12: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	5.368	4	0.025
Likelihood Ratio	4.329	4	0.036
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.919	1	0.033
N of Valid Cases	637		

Discussion
The major findings of the study are presented in a manner that directly
addresses the research questions of the study. This research first of all
revealed that a significant majority (45%) of respondents use social
media on a daily basis. This is quite important because it is
demonstrative of a high dependence on social media among students.
Most students (30%) also indicated that they spent about 30minutes
each time they visit social media sites. This is indicative that most
respondents frequent social media sites but they do not stay on for long,
this might probably be because of the relatively high data cost in Ghana
which makes internet communication expensive for students.

Regarding the students' purposes for using social media, the study
revealed that a significant majority (70.6%) of respondents use SNS for
instant messaging or communication. This shows that more students
rely on SNS for person-to-person communication or for staying in touch
and closely connected with friends and family.

Further, the study revealed that most students (41.8%) perceive social
media to be interesting. This may somehow be seen as a negative
consequence of social media use because it robs students of their
precious study time. Students are also very much aware of the

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advertising benefits of social media use.

Finally, concerning the effects of social media, the majority (43%) of
students indicated that they have experienced identity theft on social
media. Others complained about stalking and blackmail on social
media, whilst only 6.6% considered social media to be addictive.

As stated earlier, the first objective of the study sought to ascertain
students' perceptions of Social Networking Sites (SNS). The study
found that students perceived SNS as interesting tools useful for
research and learning. Stelzner, (2018), in contextualizing the whole
phenomenon of social media established that, many people find social
media interesting because it doesn't recognize any time or space limits
and that user-generated content is distributed and disseminated across
borders and time zones within seconds of posting online. Four Hundred
and One (401) students perceive SNS as a relevant tool for advertising
as it is useful for stimulating sales and promoting startup businesses.
Some negative perceptions were also identified as students perceived
social media to be disruptive because it reduces study time. The findings
of the study regarding the first objective support earlier studies,
(Qualman, 2009; Garrison et al. 2000; and Nnaka, 2016).   The findings
also support the assertion of Nnaka, (2016) that, young adults at the
university have embraced social media sites in all of its states much
more than the older generations as it helps them use it to connect with
their peers, share information, reinvent their personality and also
showcase their social lives.

The second objective assessed the SNS that students frequently used. It
was found that (91%) of respondents use Facebook more daily than any
other SNS. An outcome that is particularly consistent with the position
of Chaffey, (2016) and Raj et al. (2018), is that Facebook is arguably the
most popular social media platform around the world. Stelzner, (2018)
also quipped that Facebook is popular because it is a social networking
site where users can set up a profile, create formal connections to people
they know, communicate, and share preferences and interests. This
social media has more than 2.38 billion monthly active users as of
March 2019. The outcomes of the present research are also consistent
with the findings of Hassan and Landani (2015), that several University
students make use of social media, especially Facebook, because they
can identify themselves with the engaging nature of the social media

phenomenon.

The third objective of the study was concerned with the purposes of using social networking sites. In this context, the study revealed that students have multiple motivations for using social media. The study revealed students use social media for instant messaging or for chatting. Many students also use it for learning and research whilst others use social media purposely for entertainment. These findings of the study confirm earlier studies including Raj et al. (2018) and Blachnio et al. (2018), averred that students at the university participate in virtual conversations using social media. McLoughlin and Lee (2010), also contend that the synchronous nature of communication on social media disrupts information sharing or dissemination that used to be done in the olden days when information moved linearly from the mass (traditional) media to the people to more open space.

The findings are also in agreement with Nnaka 2016, who reported that students mainly used social networking sites to stay in touch and connect with family and friends. It is important to note, that students were not oblivious to the educational uses of social media as they considered it an interesting platform for learning. Contrary to previous studies, this current study recorded very minimal adverse effects of SNS; such as its effects on academic performance and the tendency to make students addicted.

Recommendations

First, following the popularity of social networking sites among university students, pedagogy and curriculum, must be integrated into new media platforms such as SNS at the university level so that students can adequately experience the educational benefits of social media.

Also, educators must endeavour to engage students to use SNS more often for educational purposes such as research and learning. Additionally, based on the disruptive nature of SNS and the negative effects associated with same, it is imperative for students to better manage time spent on SNS effectively to avoid social media addiction, stalking, identity theft, and other negative consequences associated with social media use.

Further, the relevance of social media for advertising was apparent in this study, in the light of this, marketers can target students via social

media. Students who ran businesses can also take advantage of social media for brands promotion. This researcher, therefore, recommends SNS for marketing and advertising.

Future studies may consider increasing the sampling size and expand the scope to include more universities to validate the outcomes of this exploratory study.

Conclusion

Following the field survey and the analysis of findings, this study concludes that first of all students of GIJ have a positive perception of social media. This is consistent with the position of earlier studies, especially Lee et al. (2013), who reported that students enjoy using social media. Further to that, students of GIJ prefer Facebook to any other social media platform. They also spend at least 30 minutes on SNS every day.

Also, consistent with [Nnaka, 2016] and Blachnio et al. (2018), that students mainly used social networking sites to stay in touch and connect with family and friends. This notwithstanding, students are not oblivious of the educational uses of SNS, they just do not use it as much for such purposes.

It can also be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the frequency in using social networking sites and perceptions about the effective use of social media for advertising goods and services among students. Again there is a significant relationship between the frequency in using SNS and perception of SNS among students. Owners of SNS platforms must therefore, take into account the results and concerns raised by students and create more attractive plugins in the platforms to attract students to learn. This to a very large extent, will override the negative tendencies and consequences for patronizing SNS platforms.

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