

**ASSESSING FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY: A STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT**

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ABSTRACT

Academic performance of students has been an issue of great concern to the students, teachers, educational administrators, employers of labour, and the government as well, as the strength of any nation rests greatly on the quantity and quality of its manpower. Effort was made to discuss extensively the influence of social media, peer pressure, age, study habit, and interest in advanced degrees on the academic performance of undergraduate students among various other factors that influence students' academic performance. The population was made up of undergraduate students of the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, University of Port Harcourt. 200 students were sampled from the university. Four point Likert Scale questionnaire consisting of 25 items were used to elicit responses from the students on the five factors studied. The questionnaire was manually processed and data analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings however show that social media promotes learning, while addiction to social media influence academic performance negatively; good peer group has positive influence on academic performance, while bad peer group influence the students' academic performance negatively; though age has a little influence on the students' academic performance, interest in the course of study and self-discipline exert more influence on the students' academic performance more than age; study habit has strong influence on the students' academic performance as well as interest in advanced degrees. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that Nigerian tertiary institutions should ensure effective guidance and counselling services within the institutions as the above enumerated problems can be drastically reduced through effective guidance and counselling services as well as the marketing of the effective and efficient adoption of the above mentioned academic performance variables to aid students achieve their academic sustainable goals in the current and future.

Keywords: Academic performance, Social media, Age, Peer group, Classical Conditioning theory of learning, operant conditioning theory of learning, Social learning theory, and Study habit.

INTRODUCTION

Academic Performance as an umbrella covering students' academic success and prosperity has been of enormous interest to researchers' because of its effect on the individual and the society at large (Okereke and Lucky, 2014). Academic Performance of the students influences their vocational career, self -esteem, motivation, and the individual's personality. Academic achievement is of utmost importance for the wealth of a nation and its prosperity. There is a strong link between academic achievement and socio - economic development of the members of the society. It is the outcome of education - the extent to which a student has learned (Adeyemi and Adeyemi, 2014). In this study, Academic Performance is characterized by the overall performance in each year which culminates in a Grade Point Average (GPA) (Sariem, Fwangshak1, Shalkur and Adeniyi, 2014). The GPA score comprises of the students' performance in test, class assignments/works and examination. This GPA score denotes that the higher the score the better the academic performance of the student. Thus, GPA will be a good measure of students' academic performance.

It baffles the researchers when they hear some students complain that 'other student(s) perform better than themselves because the former is better inclined' while both were taught in the same environment with same teaching method, same content, same time, by the same person and under the same condition. In the same sets of students, one finds the geniuses as well as the dummies. While the geniuses make positive impact in the society, the dummies go about constituting nuisance both to himself, immediate community and the entire society at large. In the academia, students are declared geniuses or dummies based on their academic performance. It is based on the above phenomena of some students performing better than others after being provided with the same required educational services that made the researchers to embark on this study in order to determine those factors that influence students' academic performance and to find ways of addressing them so that the students' academic performance can be improved upon.

Most researchers failed to critically and diligently assess these factors such as social media, peer group, age, study habit and interest in advanced degrees among numerous factors influencing students' academic performance; and that is the gap that this study wish to fill.

Statement of the Problem

Students in institutions of learning are majorly the youth who axiomatically loathe hard work and believe in the 'get rich quick syndrome'. They aspire to be great without positively piloting their academic affairs in a justifiable manner. In truism, the social media has come as a new revolution to help student achieve their academic dreams by providing them with the necessary opportunity to explore

and exploit avenues to update and upgrade their knowledge acquisition horizon (Ezeah, Asogwa and Obiorah, 2013). But paradoxically and ironically, this channel has been abused and totally relegated for other things that negate knowledge acquisition and growth.

In the same vein, students do not take their studies seriously. They do not attend lectures, they do not participate fully even if they attend, they do not aspire to offer higher degrees such the M.Sc, M.Ed, Ph.D etc, and they join bad peerage and enjoy molesting, harassing and killing fellow students and lecturers in the name of cultism. The resultant effect is that academic performance of students has become a sorry sight such that most of Nigerian graduates have become unemployable. They could hardly read or write and that is why some erudite scholars have christened Nigerian tertiary institutions as “glorified secondary schools”.

In a nutshell, students act or behave in a very funny way, one wonders if all students came to study or not. There is high rate of examination malpractice, non-chalant attitude towards class work, chatting with online friends while lectures are going on, playing and listening to music in class, coming to class late and sometimes do not even attend or appear in class till the examination day, pays little or no attention to study materials, high rate of carry over courses, causing problems for the serious students, the lecturers and the school system at large. It is therefore based on the above phenomena that this study is specifically designed to determine those factors influencing academic performance of undergraduate students in select Nigerian universities.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to assess the factors influencing academic performance of undergraduate students in Nigerian universities. The interest of the researchers is to assess critically and identify the factors influencing academic performance of undergraduate students. The specific objectives include:

1. Social media influences students' academic performance
2. Peer group influences students' academic performance
3. Age influences students' academic performance
4. Study habit influences students' academic performance
5. Interest in advanced degrees influences students' academic performance.

Research Questions

In order to carry out a detailed study of the research, the following research questions guided the study:-

1. To what extent does social medial influence students' academic performance?
2. To what extent does peer group influence students' academic performance?
3. To what extent does age influence students' academic performance?
4. To what extent does study habit influence students' academic performance?

5. To what extent does interest in advanced degrees influence students' academic performance?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will help the students to know and adopt those positive and robust attitudes/behaviours and methods that will enhance their academic performance. It will also help the counsellors in counselling students. Industries will benefit via the availability of skilled workers. And lastly, the society at large will benefit from the improved academic performance of the students through increase in the skilled and qualified manpower which will invariably leads to high level of productivity in all sectors of the nation's economy.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was focused on factors influencing academic performance of undergraduate students of University of Port Harcourt. Factors such as social media, age, peer group, study habit and interest in advanced degrees were discussed to find out their influence on students' academic performance

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature related to this study is reviewed under the following headings:

- Conceptual review of Related Literature
- Theoretical Framework
- Review of Empirical Studies
- Summary of Literature Review

Review of Relevant and Related Literature

Academic Performance

Students are required to be evaluated by their lecturers during lecture seasons by way of giving them written quizzes and as well as during examinations at the end of every semester in Nigerian universities and as well as universities abroad. It depicts the learning achievements of students at the end of an academic session or/and at the termination of an academic programme (Joe, Kpolovie, Osonwa and Iderima, 2014). It also means how students go about with their studies in trying to improve their academic potentials and achieve a robust education and business career path in life (Sarien, Fwangshak, Shalkur and Adeniyi, 2014). It had been discovered that the new social media that is targeted towards enhancing the performance of students has ironically been the bane of students' poor academic performance in Nigerian universities. The reason is the abuse and overuse of this media platform to achieve their selfish instead of altruistic objectives.

Academic performance can be defined as the outcome of education; the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. It is a term that is used to denote the extent

to which a student has acquired knowledge, skills and wisdom after being taught by their lecturers. Researchers like Adeyemi and Adeyemi (2014) have expressed their concern over poor academic performance by students in Nigeria. They discovered in their study that this poor performance is attributed to their home environments, study habits, personal interests and parental supports. Osarenren (2013) in her study discovered that students' natural and endowed ability, parents socio-economic disposition, peer group influence and lecturers' ability and capability have direct relationships with students' academic performance.

E-learning facilitates lectures and studies and therefore leads to higher academic performance by students (Okereke and Lucky, 2014; Fayomi, Ayo, Ajayi and Okorie, n.d). Academic Performance as a yardstick for measuring students' academic success and failure had been of high interest to many scholars as a result of its effects on the individual and the society at large. The academic performance of the students influences their vocational career, self-esteem, motivation, personality, etc. Academic achievement is of utmost importance for the wealth of a nation and its prosperity. The facilities provided in the classroom provide an enabling study environment to students. If there is adequate power supply, chairs, fans and air conditioners, ceiling finishes, large windows and doors; incase of power failure; academic performance will definitely improve. But if the contrary is the case, there will be poor output by the students (Oluwunmi, Durudola and Ajayi, 2015). Eze, Ezenwafor and Obi (2015) support this statement.

Furthermore, the story of academic performance in Nigerian universities cannot be complete without making reference to the litany of corruption and impunities perpetrated by lecturers. Lecturers exploit students by way of what is known as "sorting", (collecting money by way of bribe), they molest and abuse the female students sexually, sell their poorly researched handouts and textbooks at exorbitant prices etc. this discourages students and dampens their spirit towards learning. Uche (2014) in his study had his take on corrupt practices of Nigerian lecturers.

The Social Media

The social media has become a sine qua non in modern day community, business, institutional and international communications (Okolo, Ugonna, Nebo and Obikeze, 2017). It gives individuals the ample opportunity to communicate their views and ideas in matters of private and public concerns in their personal networks (Adenubi, Olalekan, Afolabi and Opeoluwa (2013). Conversely, Thuseethan and Kuhanesan, (2014) assert that the Facebook a social media channel has ruined the future and academic performance of students in the university the world over. Social media as one of the factors influencing academic performance of students can be defined as the collective of online communication channel dedicated to community based inputs, interactions content – sharing and collaboration applications proliferated. Al-Rahmi and Othman (n.d.) state that the social media is responsible for the poor output of university students in Nigeria. They specifically pointed out in their research that Facebook users

performed poorly academically compared with non-Facebook users. Ezeah, Asogwa and Obiorah (2013) define social media as “modern interactive communication channels through which people connect to one another, share ideas, experiences, pictures, messages and information of common interest”. Othman, Apandi and Ngah (2016) define social media as “the online communications and interaction channel; and mechanism for content sharing and collaboration”. Sudha and Kavitha (2016) define it thus: “Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks”. It is a platform where people, businesses, governments share their views and opinions on critical and other issues on public agenda (Siddiqui and Singh, 2016; Okolo, Nebo, Obikeze and Ugonna, 2017)). Ezeah et al. (2013) discover that students’ overuse of the social media platform to watch pornography, engage in cyber crime and other national issues reduces their inertia to engage in rigorous academic exercise. They argue that social media is becoming an essential part of life online as social websites and applications proliferate. Hasnain, Nasreen and Ijaz (2015) conducted a study and discovered that there is a strong relationship between academic performance of students and the social media. They state that although the social media is a veritable conduit for students to explore knowledge and social skills, most students have abused its usage and have even spent enormous time on it than dealing head-on with their academic assignments.

Although there is purported overuse of the social media network by students, there seemed to exist an improvement in their reading skills (Mingles and Adams, 2015). It has been a powerful tool in learning because of its easy accessibility to varieties of information. Almost all the study materials can be found online at the students’ beck and call. One should also note that other social media activities such as Facebook, 2go’s, Twitter, Social gaming, Whatsap, etc. in addition tends to take the student away from his/her studies thereby leading to poor academic performance. Oyeyemi and Noah (2012) in their study stated thus “Nigeria schools over the years have been plagued by the wrong notion attached to the use of cell phones within and outside the school system. Olayinka (2008) reported that students are so much addicted to the use of phone nowadays. This has led to abuse and misuse of cell phone among students. Othman et al. (2016) remark that a lot of research had been done on the effect of the social media on college students’ academic results. They conducted a study and the report reveals that there is a negative relationship between the use of the social media and students’ weak academic performance.

Students of Nigerian universities no longer pay adequate attention or concentration to their studies as they instead engage themselves with pressing of their mobile phones or laptop computers; chatting friends, watching pornographic movies, engaging their minds in cyber crimes and sometimes engage in other meaningful activities such as sharing their opinions on community/local, national/regional and international/global issues.

Peer Group

Peer group has been defined by various authors as a social category of individuals of about the same age or who share the same characteristics and interest, Shepard (1981: 115). It is a group an individual belongs that influences his decisions and actions (Olalekan, 2016). "A peer group is defined as a small group of similarly aged; fairly close friends, sharing the same Activities" (Bankole and Ogunsakin, 2015). Peer group is next to the family (although refuted by Omotere, 2011) in influencing the upbringing of a child; and discovered in their study that there is a positive relationship between peer group influence and the academic performance of students in Social Studies (Fan, Odidi and James, 2016). They exert either positive or negative influence on their members. If a student belong to a study group that studies together, hire a tutor for a tutorial classes, visit the library as well as the cyber café to source for materials for research, sky will be their limit. In fact, Bankole and Ogunsakin argue that intelligent students help to bolster the academic performance of their peerage. On the contrary, if a student instead belongs to a cult group where they embark on robbery, rape female students, and totally pay lackadaisical attitude towards learning, they will perform poorly academically. Kendel (2003:113) defined peer group as a group of people who are linked by common interests, equal social position, and (usually) similar age. According to Ramsey (1991) "for both children and adults, friend enhance our pleasure, mitigate our anxieties and broaden our realm of experience". Okeke (2010) asserted that each child belong to more than one peer groups.

Peer groups exert great influence on students as it applies group pressure to enforce its norms. Peer group exert significant influence on the socio-psychological and educational upbringing of a student (Akomolafe and Adesua, 2016). It is worthy of note that 'there are many cliques (a small group of people who spend their time together and do not allow others to join them) within and outside the university environment with their varying interest. Some of them focus on fashion, modeling, religion, sex and relationship, academics and so on. For conformity and acceptance, each of the group members spends their time, energy and resources to the accomplishment of the group goal. Alvarado and Turly (2007) stated thus "The adolescent behavior is being affected significantly by peer groups which are considered the most influential social forces for bringing changes in behaviors. Kendel (2003: 118) in Ifeanacho (2012) exert that "individuals must earn their acceptance with their peers by conforming to a given groups norms, attitudes, speech patterns and dress codes. Peerage is very significantly in determining a student's academic performance. Zaki, Thabet and Hassan state thus:

"Peer group is a method of instruction that involves students teaching other students, a system of instruction in which learners help each other and learn by teaching. Peer tutoring as an instructional strategy that partners' students to help one another learn material, reinforce skills or practice a learned task. Peer tutoring often results in academic, emotional and social gains for the students involved".

Study Habit of Students

Study habits are the behaviour, attitude, character, style and the mental cum emotional disposition of a student on the trail to garner academic achievement (Egbo, 2015). It is the methods deployed by students for knowledge, skills acquisition (Benwari and Nemine, 2014). Good study habits lead to resounding academic success. They noted the following study habits as highly profitable to the academic fruition of the students; good note taking, punctuality and regularity in classes, intensive reading, good listening skills, engaging in tutorial classes, partaking in take home work and assignments, engaging in quiz competition (both oral and written), etc. Poor study habit on the contrary transfixes students and expose them to academic risks (Okeiye, Okezie and Nlemadim, 2017).

It is very germane not only to the student's academic success but also generally to his future career prospects (Onuoha and Subair, 2013). Most university students possess poor an unorganized study habit (Akpan and Salome, 2015). According to them, study habit can be defined as "those techniques such as summarizing, note taking, outlining or locating materials which learners employ to assist themselves in the efficient learning of the material at hand. Study habits are those learning tendencies that enable students to work privately. Study habit, when broken down involved the time put into study method used in studying and content of study. Study habit is a method or pattern in which students adopts in studying their books". It is a personalized approach adopted by a student to study and learn after normal and regular classroom exercises have taken place. It refers to studying outside the physical presence of the lecturer or tutor. It helps the student in becoming a expert in that field or area of study. Anke Nutsupko (2011) states that study skills/habits are tools and methods by which students are undertaken and pursued successfully. Study habit could be effective or ineffective, either which influences the students' academic performance in a positive or negative way respectively. Ekechukwu (2013) defined effective study habit as "a determined and purposeful behavior pattern which is geared towards mastering an assignment and ensuring competence in a given work. She further stated that "Like most skills, it can be developed and improved upon". Tunde, Oke and Alam (2010) state thus: "Study habits refer to whether students study at the same time each day, whether they shut off radio, television while reading and whether they paraphrase and write down what they have read during the practical instructions. Study habit also describes some external activities which serve to activate and facilitate the internal process of learning". In truism, academic success is a function of a student's study habit (Ella, Akpabio and Samson-Akpan (2015). Osa-Edoh and Alutu (2012) note that effective study need to adopt the following skills and techniques – effective and fast reading, time planning, better study environment, concentration, note taking, comprehension, and remembering.

Age of Students

Age is a very vital factor in academic performance as it has become a predictor of success (Abubakar and Oguguo, 2011). It affects the academic performance of a student (Adeyemi and Adeyemi, 2014). Adeyemo and Kuyoro (2013; Amro, Mundy, Kupczynski, 2015) agree with the above statement. There is no significant relationship between age and academic performance (Amuda, Bulus, and Joseph, 2016).

They argue that it is very relative to ascribe academic performance to a particular age. Noting that students of older age may perform better because as their age increases, it reflect on their developmental stages and this positively affects their performance in class (Ebenuwa-Okoh, 2010). On the hand, younger students do perform better because of their relative freedom. Age has been defined as the number of years a person has lived or a thing has existed. It means how old a student is while attending the university (Amuda, et al., 2016). Jean Piaget, a renowned psychologist in his theory of human development states that there is a considerable overlapping between the human cognitive developmental stages (age) and retention of characteristics or learning. However, in his final stage of human cognitive developmental stage known as **formal Operational stage** ranging from 12 – 15years and above, he stated that the individual at this stage can now think in an abstract terms and deal with hypothetical situations. Students in tertiary education are from 15years and above, meaning that they can think in an abstract way, deal with hypothetical situations and make a logical deduction of issues.

Student Interests to Acquire Higher Degrees

Nwankwo (2013) defined interest as a tendency to seek out and participate in a type of activity. It is a classified human sentiment which goes along with values, attitudes and other forms of human preferences. Students with higher academic quotient (IQ) naturally develop the zeal and tendency to acquire higher degrees such as M.Ed, M.Sc, MBA, and Ph.D and certificates. As a result of such noble anticipation and expectation, they assiduously study harder than their mates in order to satisfy their life ambition. Before a person decides on what kind of course to study in an institution he/she will think not only of capability of doing the course but also whether he/she actually has interest in the course. An interest in a particular programme helps one to give it all it takes to be successful.

Theoretical Framework

Operant Conditioning Theory of Learning

B.F Skinner propounded the operant conditioning theory in 1937 (Staddon and Cerutti, 2003). This theory is pivoted on the assumption that learning could easily take place when an individual acts well, and is rewarded accordingly (Ademola, 2001). In order words, learning takes place in situation of a change in behaviour. According to him, the reinforcement of an exhibited behaviour motivates a repetition of similar behaviour. Skinner asserts that behaviour can occur naturally without a stimulus. These behaviours are called operant because they are the cause of reinforcement as well as retributions (Ademola, 2001). All human and animal behaviour is a function of learning and reinforcement (Hartley, 2013; Hoque, 2013). In his opinion, Hoque (2013) emphasized that operant behaviour is that which is not related to any known stimulus. He mentioned two types of reinforcement- positive and negative reinforcement, and presents them thus:

“A positive reinforcement is any stimulus such as food, water, sexual contact etc. the introduction or presentation of which increases the

likelihood of a particular behaviour. In the educational context, praise, grades, medals and other prizes awarded to students are examples of positive reinforcers. A negative reinforcer is any stimulus the removal or withdrawal of which increases the likelihood of a particular behaviour. An electric shock, a loud noise etc. are said to be negative reinforcers. In the educational context, one example may be a teacher's saying to the students that whoever does drillwork properly in the class would be exempted from homework".

The addition or subtraction of a reward or punishment as a result of environmental condition to encourage good behaviour or discourage a bad one is the fundamental element of operant conditioning learning theory (Ivana, 2015). In his experiment, Skinner deployed a lever and electric current to demonstrate operant conditioning: he used rats and pigeons.

Driving this theory home in relation to academic performance of students, it could be observed that when marks are awarded students for participating in classes by answering lecturer's questions, they will definitely work harder to improve their academic performance. And perhaps on the contrary, when marks are not awarded, they become uninterested in the academic activities and this will stifle their overall performance.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory started as a result of Robert Sears intent to combine the psychoanalytic and stimulus-response theory in order to render a vivid understanding and explanation of the behaviour of humans (Grusec, 1992). Nonetheless, Albert Bandura, notes Grusec, in explaining the social learning theory circumvented the psychoanalytic and drive dimension but rather projected the cognitive and information processing tendencies that reflect social behaviour. Albert Bandura is the formulated the social learning theory which propounded that learning could not solely depict human behaviour (Edinyang, 2016). According to him, social learning theory of learning indicates the power of the learners; in this case the students, exhibit behaviour and manners in consonance with the immediate environment they find themselves. That is, behaviour and environment interact on regular basis.

Behaviour is triggered by the inertia (Bandura, 1971). Inertia implies the innermost forces that are driven by needs, wants, impulses and drives that operate subliminally outside human socio-psychological equilibrium and manipulations. He argue that associational preferences is one of the variables that determine observational experiences and assert that an individual will definitely be influenced either positively or negatively with the people he relates with most of the time. In most cases, a student is influenced by his peerage. People learn from their relationship

and interaction with other in the same or even distant environment (Razieh, 2012; Smith and Berge, 2009). Razieh submitted that individuals exhibit similar behaviour after having observed the behaviour of others around them. Especially if the observed experience of an individual is positive or if, the observed behaviour attracts a reward. In Nigeria, an Igbo adage says “that when a nanny goat is eating ‘Mucuna beans’, the kid watches its mouth”. That is to say that we are pragmatically influenced by the world around us; but we cannot just engage in perpetrating evil because people around us do evil. Edinyang (2016) opined that we are really the architect of our actions and therefore submits that we control our behaviour through self regulation. In his study, Edinyang states part of his abstract thus:

“Social learning theories deal with the ability of learners to imbibe and display the behaviors exhibited within their environment. In the society, children are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents within the family, characters on mass/social media, friends within their peer group, religion, other members of the society, and the school. Children pay attention to some of these agents of socialization and imbibe the behaviours exhibited. At a later time they may imitate the behavior they have observed regardless of whether the behavior is appropriate or not, but there are a number of processes that make it more likely that a child will reproduce the behavior that its society deems appropriate for its sex and age”.

Social learning theory aids understanding of human behavior (Grusec, 1992). Bandura (1971) states that learning occurs through the process of observation and imitation, often called observation or imitation learning. It involves observing a pattern of behavior, and later performing that particular behavior or one that is similar to it. Nwankwo (2007) states that individuals can learn by reading words or observing printed pictures, and that learning can occur through various forms of modeling which include live, filmed, audio tape-recorded and symbolic. Nwankwo identified four processes involved in social learning as thus:

1. **Attention process:** this simply means that for an individual to learn, he/she must at least pay attention to what need to be learned.
2. **Retention Process:** Here the learner organizes and retains what has been observed, reliving experiences, mentally rehearsing future experience for storage into the long term memory.
3. **Motor reproduction process:** this process can be likened to reciting what has been learnt. Depending on the physical capabilities, the learner then converts cognitive representations into action.
4. **Motivational process:** the actual or imagined reward of imitated behavior determines whether the behavior will be encouraged or extinguished. For instance, replacing a particular study habit which yielded little or no positive result with another perceived to yield a better result.

The researcher therefore anchored the present study on Social Learning theory because of its detailed processes of acquiring and retaining knowledge.

Relatedly, students who are provided with the enabling study environment will perform better than those not provided with better class rooms infrastructures. Similarly, more qualified lecturers will be a motivation to the students and therefore bolter their academic performance.

Review of Empirical Studies

Nwabueze and Obara (2011) studied Social Networking and Instructional Enhancements in Tertiary Institutions in South-Southern Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational survey design which had all the teaching staff and students of University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Science and Technology as the population. A purposive sample of 350 was drawn from the population using the stratified random sampling technique. Questionnaire was used as the instrument, and it was validated and its reliability was established at 0.89. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions and Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to test the hypotheses. The result revealed that social networking enhances students engagement in class, increases active learning, increased group work, improve process continuity, higher level of learning, strengthens relationships, increase information sharing and exchange opportunities to network with other students' from other schools, as well as improve innovative and creating skills.

While Nwabueze and Obara (2011) Studied Social Networking and Instructional Enhancement in Tertiary Institutions using teaching staff and students of University of Port Harcourt and the students of Rivers state University of Science and Technology, the study focused on the influence of social media as one of the factors influencing academic performance of students using undergraduate students' of University of Port Harcourt only. Used descriptive survey research as against the correlational survey design used in the above study, maintained the stratified random sampling techniques used above.

Oyeyemi and Noah (2012) studied the Efficacy of Mobile Device Assisted Learning. Using cell phone features like mobile internet and text messages (sms). Questionnaire was administered on 100 students in Oyo Local Educational District of Lagos State, which were Adenirian Ogusanya International School Ijanikin Lagos, Lagos State Model College, Ojo and Adeniji Goodwill Ijaniki. A test re-test method was used to determine the co-efficient, was computed and it gave a reliability co-efficient of 0.87. Chi-Square was used for data analysis. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between the educational potential of mobile internet and effective teaching and learning.

While Oyeyemi and Noah (2012) studied the efficacy of mobile device assisted learning using secondary school students from Lagos state Educational District, the research studied Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students of University of Port Harcourt, focusing on social media, age, study habit, peer group, and interest in advanced degrees among other factors. Descriptive

research design was used as against the correlational research design used by Oyeyemi and Noah (2012).

Kanu and Norah (2010) studied Relationship Between Students' Diversity and Academic Performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Abia state. The population was made up of the students in the three educational zones in Abia State. 420 students were sampled from about 4230 SS3 Students in Aba educational zone, which was chosen from five local government areas in the zone. A four point Likert Scale of questionnaire consisting 25 items was used to find the responses of students on the five dimensions of diversity used in the study. The five dimensions are gender, social class, age, ethnic background and religion. Their responses were correlated with their academic performance. The hypotheses were analyzed statistically using the Pearson Product Moment correlation. Each of the hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between social class, age, and religion and the academic performance of senior secondary school students. There is no significant relationship between gender, ethnic background and academic performance of the same group of students.

While Kanu and Nora (2012) studied Relationship between Students Diversity (Age, gender, social class, religion, and ethnic background) and Academic Performance of Senior Secondary Schools in Abia State, using correlational research design. The present research studied Factors,(age, study habit, social media, peer group and interest in advanced degrees) Influencing Academic performance of Undergraduate students of University of Port Harcourt using descriptive survey research design.

Valli, Santhi, Angela, Noor, Abdul and Nasirudeen (2014) studied Factors Contributing to Academic Performance of Students in Tertiary Institution in Singapore. The main method of data collection was a semi-structured questionnaire administered to 144 students drawn from School of Health Sciences – Ngee Ann Polytechnic, 535 Clement Road, Singapore and Alexandra road Singapore. The specific objectives of the study were to determine if factors such as gender, age, and nationality of student, part-time employment, extracurricular activities and interest in pursuing higher studies affects academic success. The study also examined the learning methods use by students' and how these affected their academic scores. The students' Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) was used as a measure of Academic performance. The study was conducted using correlational research design. The data was analyzed quantitatively and the results showed that factors such as gender, nationality of student, co-curricular activities and interest in pursuing higher degrees affected students' academic scores.

While Valli and Santhi, et al (2014) studied Factors Contributing to Academic Performance of Students in Tertiary Institution in Singapore, the present research studies Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Undergraduate students of University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Both studies have three factors in common, which are age, interest in advanced degrees and study habit. The previous study used correlational research design while the present study uses descriptive survey

research design.

Saijad, Riasat, Abdul, Aamir and Minhas (2013) studied the Impact of Peer Groups on The Academic achievement of Secondary School Students. All government secondary school of District Marden constitute population of the study. Through a self- developed questionnaire, data were collected from three secondary schools and was analyzed on simple percentage, correlational and linear regression. The study demonstrated that educational decisions including school selection and subject selection were strongly affected by members of peer groups the study was survey type and descriptive in nature.

Summary of Literature Review.

Literature reviewed in this study consist of conceptual, theoretical and empirical reports. From the conceptual and theoretical perspective, one will deduce that factors such as age, peer group, study habit, social media and interest in advanced degrees influence the students' academic performance in one way or the other.

From the empirical studies both locally and internationally, it was found that most of the factors studied by different researchers such as social media, age, interest in advanced degrees, peer group and study habit among others had a significant relationship/influence on the academic performance of students. Majority of the studies used correlation research design while the present study adopted descriptive survey design. Much ink has been spilled by our past educational researchers regarding factors influencing academic performance of students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design adopted in this study is descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey study is the type of research design in which the researcher collects data from a large sample drawn from a given population and describes certain features of the sample as they are at the time of the study which are of interest to the researcher, however without manipulating any independent variables of the study (Nwankwo, 2011). Descriptive Survey Design is therefore that type of research design that examines an event, a situation, or phenomenon as it is currently by gathering information from a large population, without the manipulation of any variable.

The present study used descriptive survey design because the researcher collected data from large sample of Undergraduate students of University of Port Harcourt on the Factors Influencing Academic Performance. No variable was manipulated.

Area of the Study

This study was carried out in University of Port Harcourt. It is a Federal University with about 35,000 – 40,000 students (graduate and undergraduate students). It is situated in Choba along East west road of

Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria. It comprises of (10) ten faculties, namely:

1. Faculty of Humanities
2. Faculty of Social Sciences
3. Faculty of Management Sciences
4. Faculty of Engineering
5. Faculty of Health Sciences
6. Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences
7. Faculty of Dentistry
8. Faculty of Pharmacy
9. Faculty of Agriculture
10. Faculty of Education

The focus of this study is on the Factors influencing Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students. The researcher is therefore convinced that adequate sample size will be assured based on the large population of students whom the researcher believe can read and write well.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises of all the undergraduate students of university of Port Harcourt which ranges from 25,000 – 30,000 students. Data was gotten from University of Port Harcourt website.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample of 961 students was used for this study. The sample was taken from (5) five departments out of five faculties taken from the ten faculties in University of Port Harcourt through simple random Sampling. The Basket and pick out method (BAPOM) was used. 266 students was taken from Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling, 145 students from Accounting department, 30 students from Animal Science department, 360 students from Linguistics and Communication studies and 160 students from Biochemistry department, making it total of 961 students.

200 respondents were drawn from the sample using proportional stratified random sampling.

Departments	Animal science	Educational Psychology	Accounting	Linguistics & comm.	Biochemistry	Total
Population	30	266	145	360	160	961
Proportion	00.30	0.27	0.15	0.37	0.17	
Sample size	6	55	31	75	33	200

Composition of the Sample through Proportional Stratified Random Sampling

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection for this study is questionnaire. The questionnaire is a close ended and multi variated items designed by the researcher, using 4 – point rating scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. It is a non – cognitive assessment tool designed to elicit information on how study habit, peer group, interest in advanced degrees, age and social networking influence academic

performance. The Logical Construction method was used in writing the items of each section. The items were edited and re-edited by the researcher and relevant others who took out time to go through the items over and over again.

Because of the problems inherent in non-cognitive assessment tools, the researcher disguised the purpose of the instrument by not labeling each section with the appropriate name. The items were both negatively and positively keyed in, and all written in a simple sentence to avoid ambiguities.

For the purpose of scoring the various sections of the instrument, the response level of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) was quantified 4 points, 3 points, 2 points and 1 point respectively for the positive keyed items, and in the reverse order for the negatively keyed items. Based on the assigned weights and for the fact that the instrument is multi variated, the total score of each respondents will be obtained for each section of the test by adding the scores for all the items of each section. The sectional total score and the grand total score for each student will be noted on the instrument. For the fact that each section of the scale contain 5 items responded on 4 point scale of 1, 2, 3, and 4 points respectively, the minimum score for each section will be 5 while the maximum will be 20; minimum of 25 and maximum of 100 points for the entire test.

Validation of the Instrument

Here, the researcher focused on face, content and construct validity. The test item was given to two experts in the field of Educational Psychology, Guidance and counseling and the researcher's supervisor, who took out time to go through the items over and over again, removed some items that do not relate to the topic under discussion, and even added their own knowledge. Thereby certifying it to be valid before the researcher was able to come out with the final items.

Reliability of the Test

The reliability of the instrument was determined using test re-test. Twenty students who were not part of the sample were drawn using simple random sampling techniques from the population. The instrument was administered to 20 students with a request from the researcher for them to answer honestly. The same test was administered again to the same group after two weeks interval to help remove the memory effect of the first test. In addition, the test items were shuffled during the second administration to control the problem of response set among some respondents. The first and second test scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The multi-variated nature of the instrument led the researcher to find the reliability coefficient of each of the section as well as of the entire test.

The following stability coefficients were established for the various sections of the instrument, namely, Social Networking ,0.72; Peer Group, 0.85; Age, 0.70; Study habit, 0.72; Interest in Advanced Degrees,

0.83; and 0.91 for the entire items. The coefficient values obtained are therefore high enough to permit the use of the instrument for this study.

Method of Administration and Data Collection

The researcher established good level of rapport with the respondents and explain the reason and need for them to respond honestly to the instrument. Copies of the instrument was administered directly to the respondents and the filled copies collected at the spot.

Data analysis Techniques

The method of data analysis that was adopted for this study is mean and standard deviation. The criterion mean is 2.5 since the researcher used four point likert scales of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) which was quantified on 4point, 3points, 2points, and 1point respectively. From the criterion mean, any variable with 2.5 and above will be accepted, while any below 2.5 will be rejected. The researcher was able to retrieve 200 completed questionnaires out of the 220 questionnaire distributed. The questionnaire was manually processed.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data collected is presented and analyzed in this chapter. Criterion mean of 2.5 was used in analyzing the data. This presentation and analysis are based on the response received on the questionnaire presented to the respondents.

Research Question One: To what extent does Social Media influence students' academic performance?

Table 1

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	CRITERION MEAN	RESULT
1.	Students use online Social Networking Sites to enhance their studies	3.3	0.78	2.5	Accepted
2.	Some students use Social networking sites when lecture is going on and this has negative influence on their academic performance.	3.5	0.68		Accepted
3.	Addiction to Social Networking is detrimental to students' Academic Performance.	3.4	0.82		Accepted
4.	Social networking sites really provide enough opportunities for students to promote and enhance their studies.	1.95	0.85		Rejected
5.	Spending time on social networking sites reduces time for personal studies	3.5	0.71		accepted
	Grand Mean	3.1			

Based on research question one, items 1, 2, 3 and 5 with the mean scores of 3.3, 3.5, and 3.4 and with the standard deviations of 0.78, 0.68, 0.82 and 0.71 respectively were accepted, while item 4 with mean score of 1.95 and standard deviation of 0.85 was rejected. The grand mean was 3.1 which is very high

above the criterion mean. This shows that though students use online social networking sites to enhance their studies, addiction to these social networking sites has a strong negative influence on their academic performance

Research Question Two: To what extent does Peer Group influence students’ academic performance?

Table 2

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	CRITERION MEAN	RESULT
1.	Good Peer influence helps one’s Academic Performance.	3.7	0.52	2.5	Accepted
2.	Students who resist negative peer pressure perform better academically.	3.4	0.70		Accepted
3.	Friends who are often more concern about their studies other things like fashion, sports, business, clubs, sex relationships, etc perform better academically.	3.3	0.91		Rejected
4.	Associating with friends who are not encouraging in studies helps one’s academic performance.	1.67	0.96		Rejected
5.	I hate to study with friends who have difficulties concentrating in their study because they draw me back instead of helping me.	3.3	0.82		Accepted
	Grand mean	3.1			

On research question two, items 1, 2, 3 and 5 with the mean scores of 3.7, 3.4, 3.3, and 3.3 with the standard deviations of 0.52, 0.70, 0.91 and 0.82 respectively were accepted, while item 4 with mean score of 1.67 and standard deviation of 0.96 was rejected. The grand mean was 3.1 which is very high above the criterion mean. The result shows that peer group has great influence on students’ academic performance. While good peers influence academic performance positively, bad peer group influence it negatively.

Research Question Three: To what extent does Age influence students’ academic performance?

Table 3

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	CRITERION MEAN	RESULT
1.	Adolescents study better because of their involvement in economic/social activities.	2.7	0.98	2.5	Accepted
2.	Young adults (23 – 34) study better because they are more focused than adolescents	2.4	0.88		Rejected
3.	Older adults (35 and above) study better because of their relative sense of maturity.	2.3	0.85		Rejected
4.	Self discipline more than Age influences Academic Performance.	3.7	0.52		Accepted

5.	Interest in course of study Influences Acad performance more than Age	3.6	0.67		Accepted
	Grand Mean	2.9			

On research question three, items 1,4 and 5 with the mean scores of 2.7, 3.7, and 3.6 and with the standard deviations of 0.98, 0.52, and 0.67 respectively were accepted, while items 2 and 3 with the mean scores of 2.4 and 2.3, and standard deviations of 0.88 and 0.85 respectively were rejected. The grand mean was 2.9 which is above the criterion mean. This shows that age has a little influence on students' academic performance based on the fact that adolescents (18-22years) study better than older adults as a result of their relatively less involvement in economic and social activities. It further revealed that other factors such as self-discipline, interest in the course of study influence students' academic performance more than age.

Research Question Four: To what extent does Study Habit influence students' academic performance?

Table 4

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	CRITERION MEAN	RESULT
1.	Studying one's books before exams makes for a better grade.	3.6	0.64	2.5	Accepted
2.	It is good to pay attention to class works and assignments just as much as the examination.	3.7	0.51		Accepted
3.	Making references to other text materials is better than sticking to one text material.	3.8	0.46		Accepted
4.	Beginning a long term assignment shortly after it is given gives chance for a better grade than starting it late.	3.6	0.60		Accepted
5.	Attending extra moral lesson on difficult courses helps.	3.6	0.60		Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.7			

From the above table, the whole items were accepted, with a grand mean of 3.7 which is very high above the criterion mean. This shows that study habit has great influence on students' academic performance. While good study habit exert positive influence, poor study habit exert negative influence on the students' academic performance.

Research Question Five: To what extent does Interest in Advanced Degree influence students' academic performance?

Table 5

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	STANDARD	CRITERION MEAN	RESULT
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			DEVIATION		
1.	Desires for Advanced Degrees causes students to work harder	3.4	0.69	2.5	Accepted
2.	Low interest for school works and activities can lead to poor Academic Performance.	3.4	0.75		Accepted
3.	Most students who seek graduate degrees mostly for promotion, political factors and their related reasons pays little or no attention to their studies.	2.9	0.83		Accepted
4.	Students who have interest in Advanced Degrees do not care if they get low grades or not.	1.95	0.81		Rejected
5.	When you set a goal for academic advancement you do everything possible to attain your goal.	3.7	0.49		Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.1			

From the above table, every other item was accepted except item number 4 with mean score of 1.95 and the standard deviation of 0.81. The grand mean was 3.1 which is very high above the criterion mean. This shows that interest in advanced degrees has a significant influence on the students' academic performance.

Summary of Results

1. Addiction to social networking sites has tremendous negative effect on students' academic performance.
2. Peer group has great influence on students' academic performance. While good peers influence academic positively, bad peer group influence it negatively.
3. Age has a little influence on students' academic performance based on the fact that adolescents (18-22years) studies better than older adults as a result of their relatively less involvement in economic and social activities. It also discloses that other factors such as self-discipline, interest in the course of study influence students' academic performance more than age.
4. Study habit has great influence on students' academic performance. While good study habit exert positive influence, poor study habit exert negative influence on the students' academic performance.
5. Interest in advanced degrees has a significant influence on the students' academic performance.

Discussion of the Results

The findings from research question one revealed that students use social media to enhance their studies. It also reveals that addiction to social networking sites has a grave negative effect on the students' academic performance. The result is quite expected by the researcher in the sense that many students spend more than half of their study time on social networking sites and one cannot eat his/her cake and expect to have it back. The fact that social media exposes its users to varieties of information thereby promoting knowledge cannot be ruled out but it also contains various distracting stimuli such

as social games, home videos, pornographic pictures, etc. which attracts the youths more than the sites that actually promote knowledge.

This result in one hand agreed to that of Nwabueze and Obara (2011) whose work shows that social networking enhances students' engagement in class, increase active learning, increase group work, improves process continuity, higher level of learning, strengthen relationships, increases information sharing and exchange opportunities to network with other students from other schools as well as improved innovative and creative skills. Their findings however does not include any negative aspect of social networking which could be as a result of change in time, advance in technology, etc. which made social media/networking cheaper and readily available to almost everyone than before.

The finding from research question two revealed that peer group to a great extent influence students' academic performance. While good peers influence academic performance positively, bad peers influence it negatively. The findings agreed to that of Valli and Balakrishnan et al. (2014) whose work shows that educational decisions including school selection and subject selection were strongly affected by members of peer groups.

The findings from research question three revealed that age has a little influence on the students' academic performance based on the fact that adolescents (18 -22Years) studies better than other adults because of their relatively less involvement in economic and social activities. The result also shows that other factors such as self - discipline and interests in the course of study influences the students' academic performance more than age. The result of this finding also agreed to that of Kanu and Nora (2010) whose findings shows that there is a significant relationship between age, social class, religion, and academic performance of senior secondary school student.

The findings from research question four reveals that study habit strongly influence students' academic performance. While good study habit promotes learning and lead to high level of academic performance, poor study habit hinders learning and leads to poor academic performance. The result of this finding however is of great relieved to the researcher in the sense that it asserts to the fact that there is no short cut to good success but hardwork.

The findings from research question five revealed that interest in advanced degrees strongly influence students' academic performance. This finding is in agreement with that of Valli and Balakrishnan et al (2014) whose work shows that factors such as gender, nationality of student, co-curricular activities and interest in pursuing higher degrees affect students' academic performance.

Implication of the Study

One of the findings is that social media enhances studies, while addiction to social media hinders studies

and leads to low academic performance. There is the implication that some students use social media to enhance their studies, and there is also the implication that some students are addicted to the use of social media and this has negative effect on their studies. The result also shows that peer group has strong influence on students' academic performance. There is therefore the implication that some students keep good friends who influence their studies positively; there is also the implication that some keep bad friends which will obviously have negative influence on their academic performance. Another finding shows that age has a little influence on the students' academic performance. And that interest in the course of study and self-discipline more than age influences students' academic performance. There is therefore the implication that some students don't have interest in their course of study. There is also the implication that some students lack self-discipline.

Result from research question four revealed that study habit has a strong influence on the students' academic performance. There is the implication that some students practice effective study habit, and there is also the implication that some practice ineffective study habit which affects their academic performance negatively.

Finally, research question five revealed that interest in advanced degrees influence academic performance. There is therefore the implication that some students have interest in advanced degrees, and there is also the implication that some do not have interest in advanced degrees.

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to investigate the factors influencing academic performance of undergraduate students. It is obvious that effective guidance and counseling services is of utmost importance to help students cope with various factors militating against their academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The students should therefore use social networking sites mainly for those activities that promotes learning and not for those that alienate them from their studies.
2. Students should be selective in their choice of friends. They should make friends that will help them achieve their academic goals rather than those that will lure them away from their studies bearing in mind that they have a very limited time to spend in the university and the rest of their lives to meet and make friends.
3. The students are therefore encouraged to go for the course(s) for which they have flare or likeness for.
4. Students are encouraged to develop a good study habit, be ready to purchase and use study materials, make references to other study materials and seek help from their friends and lecturers where necessary.

Summary

This research work was designed to find out those Factors that Influence Students' Academic Performance. Attention was paid basically to such factors as social media, peer group, age, study habit and interest in advanced degrees and how they influence students' academic performance. Literature related to this work was reviewed under conceptual review, theoretical framework, and review of empirical studies. Chapter three took care of the research design, area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, scoring of the instrument and data analysis techniques. Chapter four dealt with presentation and analysis of data, while discussion of results, conclusion and implications of the study was treated in chapter five.

The findings of the study revealed that addiction to social media has negative influence on the students' academic performance, good peer group influence students' academic performance positively, while bad peer group influence academic performance negatively, age has little influence on the students' academic performance, while other factors such as self- discipline and interest in the course of study influence students' academic performance more than age. More so, study habit as well as interest in advanced degrees has great influence on the students' academic performance.

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