

Social Media: Does Usage Have Impact on Academic Performance?

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Abstract University students are continually engaged with and exposed to information technology particularly social media for various motives. They spend their daily activities substantially on social media due to the availability of mobile devices and accessibility to internet that make utilizing social media more convenient. Due to inconclusive empirical evidence on the impact of social media, this study investigates the impact of social media usage intensity on the academic performance of accounting students after considering the students' personal attributes such as proficiency, gender, semester and ages differences. Adopting quantitative approach, questionnaire survey was distributed to accounting students in Melaka state and data from 113 accounting students were gathered. The result suggests that social media usage intensity has negative impact on students' performance. With regards to students' attributes, proficiency, gender and semester have impact on their performance. However, the findings may be different if the respondents come from rural areas. Thus, future research should address latest social media platforms in different regions and fields. This study is expected to contribute to the knowledge on social media usage and provide guidance to academics in adopting social media as part of teaching and learning activities in enhancing accounting students' performance.

Keywords Social Media Usage Intensity, Proficiency, Gender, Performance

1. Introduction

Social networking or media is one of the most popular and widely used technologies all over the world. It is network-based mobile applications that allow individuals or organizations to create, communicate, and share materials [1]. As social media is growing rapidly among the young generation including the colleges and universities students, the use of the social media may affect students' personal and professional live [2].

The emergence of information and communication technology especially social media has exposed humans to a better and simpler way of performing things. However, the impact of the usage of social media particularly on young scholars is a matter of concern due to the fact that majority of social media sites are mainly used by the youngsters [3]. Academic performance is one of the primary indicators for the young scholars to determine their future career path. However, with today's intense usage of social media, it is crucial to see the impact of the usage of social media on academic performance of students in order to ensure the future of the young generations.

Applying social learning theory, this study attempts to examine whether the social media usage intensity will influence the academic performance of accounting students after considering the students' personal attributes namely proficiency, gender, semester and ages differences.

2. Literature Review

The application of social media among students has been regarded as a norm across nations and age group nowadays. Innovation and social media are closely interrelated [4]. Higher learning institutions should inculcate the use of social media and provide learning environment where students can socially interact, participate in learning activities, share knowledge and encourage innovation. Technological innovations that are being introduced in social media have resulted in both positive and negative changes in learning activities. Social media usage among higher education students creates more networking, enhances learning motivation, heightens collaborative abilities; and it also offers personalized study materials [5]. Students employ social media for multiple reasons including social interaction [6] as well as for educational utility [7]. Social interaction enables students to develop new and fresh knowledge, exchange information to support each other [8].

Proper utilization of social media assists students learning during their study sessions, performing class tasks as well as supporting student's different learning styles [9]. However, [10] assert that students' performance is improved when students' interaction with peers is appropriately regulated. Social media usage may impair students' performance when social media usage is unguarded. [11] proclaim that an overwhelming social media usage may impair academic performance of students due to compulsion and distraction incepted by the media. [12] suggest study habits and learning facilities do influence the academic performance of accounting students. Learning facilities here include usage of information technology and social media. Students will acquire more knowledge and new information through communication with other students, academics and external sources [13]. Indirectly, their academic performance would be improved by way of better writing skills as they gain more vocabulary.

Students with self-belief and confidence, highly motivated and feature good habits are regarded as high proficient students [14]. These qualities will impart better performance as compared to those with lower proficiency. Past studies postulate that female students seem to surpass men academically [15]. The female students generally feature better attitude, higher motivation and better in term of stressing themselves in performing better. It is argued that students in the earlier semesters may get better academic results as compared to students in the final semester [16]. As students proceed further in their academic years, their motivation to study may be diminished due to increased number of assignments, time constraints and higher stress level [16, 17]. Due to different advantages possessed by different age levels, the age of the students may influence their academic performance. Some studies find age has a significant impact on academic performance [18] whereas others suggest that age has no

influence on academic performance [19, 29].

Consistent with [14], social learning theory which is initiated by [20] is adopted in explaining the relationship between social media usage intensity and students' performance. This theory perceives learning as a social process that students will manage their learning activities independently and more active in assimilating knowledge. The integration of learning environment at universities and the students' cognitive skills such as interaction, communication as well as collaboration with others are crucial in the students' learning outcome. As this theory observes social media as a communication medium between the students with colleagues and academics, it is suggested that the social media usage intensity may influence the students' academic performance.

3. Methodology

Using quantitative approach, a structured questionnaire survey was developed based on previous studies after pilot test had been performed. The questionnaire comprised three (3) parts. Demographic questions were asked in Part A whereas part B demonstrated the questions on the social media usage intensity in learning activities. Questions related to academic proficiency were listed in Part C. The questionnaire was distributed to accounting students of Malaysian public and private universities located at Melaka state for the period from October 2017 to March 2018.

The independent variable used in this study was the social media usage intensity in learning activities. Using 5-point Likert scales, this study adopted measurement items used by [14] and [21]. Dependent variable for this study was the accounting student's performance which was measured using the student's Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). The use of CGPA for this study was believed to be the common measurement to measure student performance since CGPA is a global indicator of students' performance. Students' personal attributes such as academic proficiency, gender, semester and age were included to control the impact of social media usage intensity in learning activities on the students' performance. Following [14], checklist and rating scales were used to measure academic proficiency.

Descriptive analysis on students' demographic information in form of frequencies and percentages would be performed. In order to investigate the impact of social media usage intensity on students' performance after considering their personal attributes, a multiple regression analysis would be performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences "SPSS" software version 23.

4. Results and Discussions

Anonymous data had been gathered from 113 respondents. Demographic information of the respondents

is presented in Table 1. The results indicate that most respondents are female and have completed 6 semesters of their study. Most of them obtain CGPA of more than 3.00 and within the range of 22 and 24 years old. These findings suggest that the respondents are performing academically and considered to be deemed matured in utilizing the social media as part of their learning process.

Table 1. Demographic Information

Students' attributes	Number	%
Gender:		
Male	24	21
Female	89	79
Semester:		
< 4 semesters	16	14
4 – 6 semesters	22	19
> 6 semesters	75	67
Age:		
≤ 21 years old	16	14
22-24 years old	93	82
≥ 25 years old	4	4
CGPA:		
≥ 3.00	90	80
< 3.00	23	20

Using regression analysis, this study attempts to investigate the impact of social media usage intensity in learning activities on students' performance. In order to achieve the research objective, the following regression model had been adopted:

$$\text{Perf}_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Usage}_i + \beta_2 \text{Proficiency}_i + \beta_3 \text{Gender}_i + \beta_4 \text{Semester}_i + \beta_5 \text{Age}_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Table 2. Multiple Regression Results

	Coefficient	t	Sig.
Usage	-0.000688	0.000419	0.103603*
Proficiency	0.006655	0.001679	0.000134***
Gender	0.013640	0.007649	0.077400*
Semester	-0.006790	0.002282	0.003623**
Age	0.002218	0.003779	0.558458
Adj. R ²	0.216068		
F-value	7.17392***		

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.10 level (2-tailed).

Based on the results presented in Table 2 above, this study suggests that the social media usage intensity has negative impact on students' performance. This view supports the argument that social media is mainly for socialization and entertainment purposes [22]. Contrary to [23], this finding is consistent with previous studies such as [24, 25, 26].

Even though social media platform is argued to be beneficial in enhancing knowledge and creativity as well as increasing technical skill; it seems that social media usage is a diversion source that does not assist students in

developing their academic achievement. Too much reliance on unreliable sources of information on social media may contribute to poorer students' performance. Ineffective use of social media may also deteriorate the academic performance as the interest and concentration of students are diverted to other non-educational and less beneficial activities [26]. The excessive social media usage intensity for non-academic purposes may cause negative psychological consequences that lead to limited time spent for learning activities [24].

In line with [15], this study proposes that students' proficiency has a positive significant relationship toward students' performance since through strong determination, efficient time management and effective relevant materials, students who are able to carry out their tasks better will outperform their colleagues [27]. Consistent with [18], this study indicates that gender will lead to better academic performance. This view is proven by greater number of female students at higher education institutions that exceeds the number of male students [28]. Semester on the other hand is found to have negative impact on performance indicating students in earlier semesters are performing better as compared to students in their final year. Students in the final year or final semester are seemed to have less motivation as they go along their studies [16]; due to increased number of assignments or projects given to them together with more challenging courses taken in the later semesters [17]. Consistent with [19], this study opines that students' performance is not affected by the students' age. This is probably due to insignificant age difference of the respondents and the self-discipline of younger students is offset by the wisdom of older students [19].

Thus, academics should be aware of the possible outcomes in utilizing the social media as part of the learning tools. They should have open discussion or tutoring services to assist their students in strategizing their learning activities and their students should be sensitized on the detrimental effect of the social media [25]. Academics should apply different types of social media to take advantage of their characteristics in improving the students' performance.

5. Conclusions

This study focuses on the effect of social media usage in learning activities toward students' performance measured based on the students' Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). After controlling for academic proficiency, gender, semester and age, this study suggests that inverse relationship is observed between the use of social media and performance. This study wishes to extend the knowledge on the use of social media in promoting the quality of social media. Without proper guidance and approach, social media may be not be regarded as an effective tool to aid students in their learning process

especially in creating an approach that is more practical for learning and developing realistic understanding of the course taken. This study is anticipated to attract more research on the effects of social media usage in learning and intense usage of social media toward students' performance. Future research should consider latest social media platform in other regions and education fields to provide insight especially if the study shifts to focus on the rural areas. The sample size of the study should also be increased so that it can enhance the oversimplification of the study.

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