

Effect of Mobile Social Networks on Secondary School Students

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Abstract-Mobile social network poses new challenges to the educational sector that needs careful understanding and approach to address. The aim of this paper is to assess the trend of mobile social networks usage among secondary schools student within Sokoto metropolis and how it affects their academic performance. The research was conducted in some selected secondary schools consisting of students aged 14 to 19. The experimental result shows our study revealed that, mobile social networks typically affects most of the student performance that are addicted to mobile social networking sites, especially those that cannot spend even a day without visiting the sites. This makes them to neglect most of their school activities based on the results of the questionnaire obtained in this study. Hence, the paper recommends that, mobile social network can be a very good tool for supporting learning activities to the students, provided there is appropriate guidance and monitoring from both parents and teachers.

Keywords: Mobile social networks, Secondary schools, Academic performance, Students

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Baruah [1] social networking site provides web-based application platforms for building social networks or social relations among individuals that shared interests or activities to interact via the internet or e-mail and now even with use of mobile phones. This implies that, social networks are developed to provide an avenue for friends, relations and even students to interact in order to share common interests and ideas. Humphreys [2] stated that social network applications have now been migrated from the computer to the mobile phone, network information and communication can be integrated into the public space; and these new services developed for mobile phones allow users to create, develop, and strengthen their social ties. These social networks services include Badoo, Facebook, Skype, MySpace, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, 2go and so on and so forth. Khan [3] conducted a research on social networking websites impact on the student and concluded that 60% of male students commonly used social networking websites for knowledge. The sample students used for the study consist of different categories of student up to the PhD level. But, the result might not be the same with secondary schools student since there level of awareness is different. Kuppusswamy and Narayan [4] argued that the social networks distracts the attention and concentration of the students toward learning and converts it towards non educational activities such as useless and unnecessary chatting; but these social networks websites can be useful for education based on sound pedagogical

principles. Greenhow [5] explained that young people's can use online social networking sites to serve as tools for supporting student learning for different educational purposes. By this explanation, social networks can be investigated thoroughly in order to provide different learning opportunities, so as to simplify the student learning processes.

Social networks access via mobile phones increased the active participation of secondary schools student in the social life even during school hours. This trend makes leaning and understanding to those categories of student very difficult task. Therefore, this study examined the effect of social networks and its consequences on student academic performance especially in secondary schools within Sokoto metropolis. The issue here is not whether it benefits the student to interact socially via electronic medium without any barrier, but how it affects their studies negatively or positively thereby decreasing or increasing their performance academically.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Survey Tool Used

The data used for this research was collected by using a questionnaire administered to 120 secondary schools students within Sokoto metropolis consisting of Nagarta College, Nana Girls Secondary School, Mohammed Zako Secondary School, Sultan Attahiru Ahmadu Secondary School and Government Girls Day Secondary School Sabon Birni Sokoto during the 2012/2013 academic session. The ages of the respondents were 14 to 19. The sample population consists of 73 male students and 47 female students, who were given the questionnaires in order to provide information about their experiences in relation to mobile social networks on their academic performance or achievement.

2.2 Respondents

A total number of 120 survey questionnaires were administered to the sample population. The questionnaire was used because it is quick and easy for the student involved in this kind of study to provide information needed, as it consisted of 7 different questions related to mobile social networks. The 120 questionnaires completed by the 73 male respondents and 47 female respondents were processed altogether. The respondents were normally students from SS1 to SS3 in the selected secondary schools. The data obtained from the study were analysed using statistical techniques.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After analysing the data obtained from the study with regard to the effect of Mobile Social Networks (MSNs) on secondary schools students. It was found that majority of the respondents have MSNs accounts as shown in figure 1.

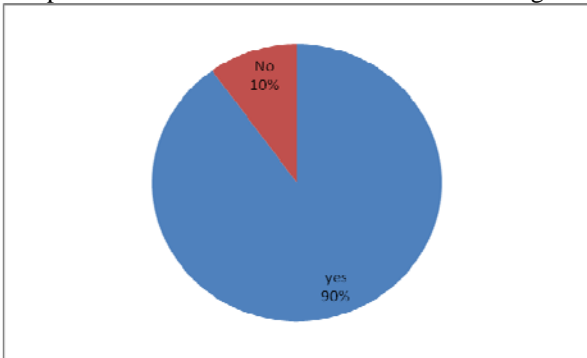


Figure 1: Respondents MSNs Accounts

It is observed that 108 secondary school students used MSNs accounts representing 90% of the responses out of a total number of 120 students while the remaining answered “No”. It implies that almost all the students examined have MSNs accounts except very little percentage.

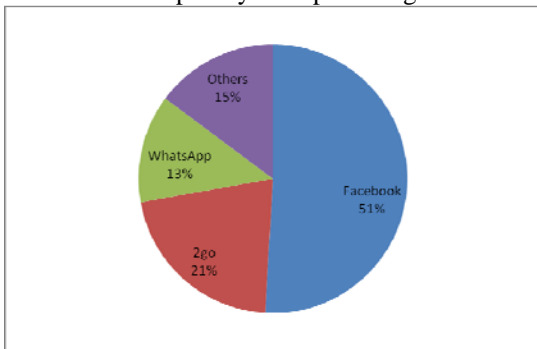


Figure 2: Categories of MSNs Accessed by the Respondents

It is noticed from the figure 2 that Facebook is the mostly used, acceptable and preferred mobile social networking site by the secondary school students representing 51% of the sample population. However, there are other MSNs used by some few numbers of students. Therefore, Facebook can be exploited to enhance and support the learning activities in secondary education.

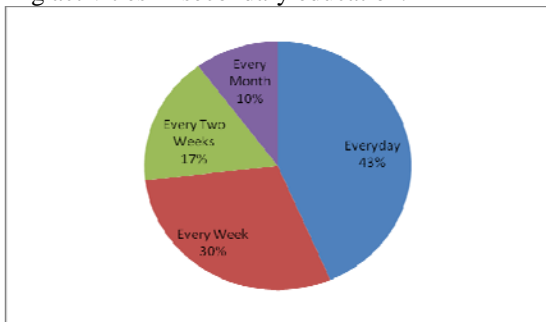


Figure 3: Frequency of Students Accessing MSNs

It follows from the figure 3 that many students cannot spend even a single day without visiting MSN sites to accomplish their different tasks. As shown in figure 3, 43% of these categories of students were involved in this type of

habit than those visiting the sites every week, two weeks and every month respectively.

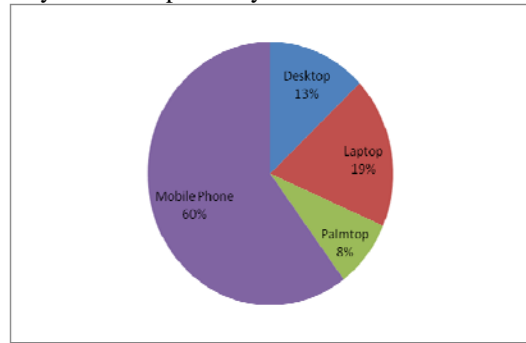


Figure 4: Devices Used for Accessing MSNs

Figure 4 shows the different types of devices used by the respondents to access MSNs in their respective domains. This research indicated that, mobile phones are the most common means used by the secondary school students of these days to access their MSN accounts representing 60% of the sample population. This implies that, nowadays mobile phone increases the active participation of secondary students in social networking world than other devices such as desktop, laptop and palmtop. It is also hardly you see a secondary school student without a mobile phone.

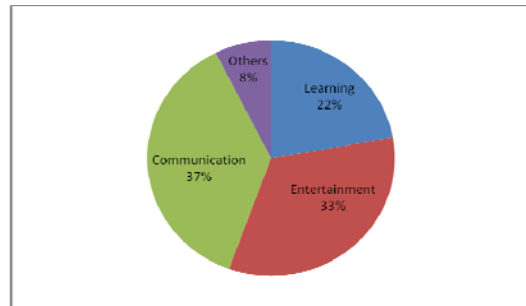


Figure 5: Purposes of Visiting MSNs

Figure 5 shows clearly that only 22% of the respondents used MSNs for learning purposes such as discussing lessons and assignments. 33% of the students used MSNs for entertainment such as listening music, watching and downloading movies. Also 37% for communication such as contacting friends and relatives while 8% for other purposes. It is observed many secondary school students in Sokoto are not aware that, MSNs can be used to aid their studies effectively.

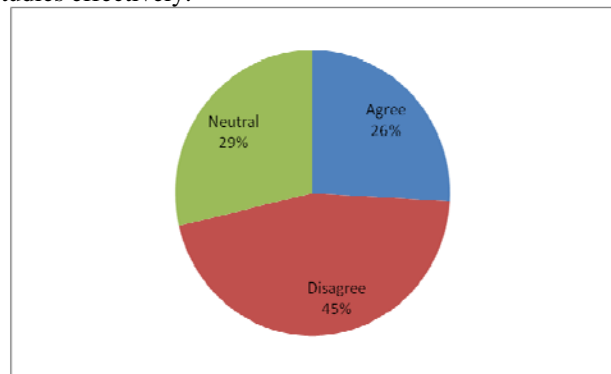


Figure 6: MSNs Improved Students Academic Performance

Secondary school students in this study did not agree that, MSNs impacted positively on their school performance representing 45% of the respondents as shown in figure 6. Also 29% are not even aware whether or not MSNs impacted on their learning activities. Only 26% of the respondents are convinced that, MSNs impacted positively on their learning activities and hence improved their academic performance.

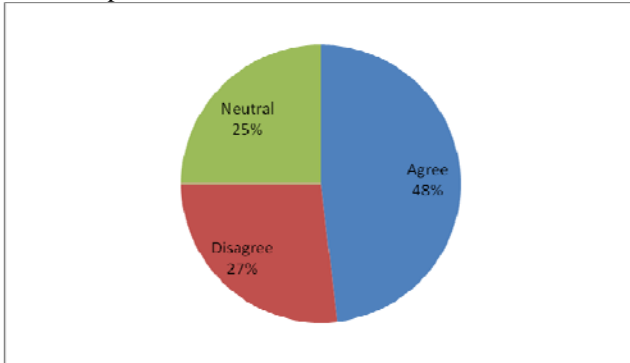


Figure 7: MSNs Divert Students Attention from School Activities

It follows from the figure 7 that 48% of the respondents agreed MSNs divert their attention and concentration from learning activities there by creating room for failures especially those that cannot spend even a day without visiting the sites, since they are not using these sites for learning related activities. It is also observed that 27% of the respondents disagreed that MSNs divert their attention from learning activities while 25% responded that MSNs had no any impact on them.

4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, our results indicated that majority of the secondary school students used MSNs sites for different purposes other than learning related activities. It is also found that, Facebook is the most frequently used MSNs by the respondents. Similarly, majority of the students also

confirmed that, they are addicted to MSNs sites in the sense that, they cannot spend any day without accessing their accounts. Moreover, mobile phones contributed immensely in providing easy access to MSNs services among secondary school students within Sokoto metropolis.

Therefore based on the findings of this research work, we made the following recommendations:

- Secondary school teachers should provide adequate knowledge and skills to the students on how to use MSNs sites to enhance their learning related activities.
- Parents should monitor their children at home on the excessive usage of mobile phones for social connections.
- MSNs features should be properly investigated in order to provide broader learning opportunities for the students.

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