



The Impact of Facebook on the Academic Performance of Cape Coast University Students

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ABSTRACT

Facebook applications are obviously changing the world and could be regarded as “a global consumer phenomenon (Eteokleous, & Pavlou, 2010). Facebook usage is one of the most common activities among kids, adolescents, and emerging adults nowadays. It offers today’s youth a portal for entertainment and communication and it is becoming one of the main platforms for accessing information and news. This aggressive adoption of Facebook among the younger generation could be attributed to their up to date knowledge of and comfort with the latest technology and the convenient accessibility to social networking tools (Eteokleous & Ktoridou, 2011). This study aimed at exploring Facebook impact on the academic performance of university students at the university of cape coast and aims to clarify to different stakeholders the relationship between Facebook usage on academic performance and to harness its full potential. This study examines the role of Facebook in students’ academic endeavors and ultimately their academic performance through their reported perceptions and reflections. It also examines factors that might influence the nature of this relationship, and its tentative impact on the academic performance of undergraduate students. An explanatory sequential mixed method approach was employed in order to get both quantitative and qualitative data, the responses of 877 university of cape coast undergraduate student were collected and were scored, coded and inserted into SPSS, and were analyzed using multiple statistical descriptive and inferential statistical tests based on the research question and the nature of the data to be analyzed using frequency tables, Anovas, post hocs and t-tests. The findings of the study explains the perception of cape coast university students on Facebook impact on their academic performance, and to what extent they use it for academic related purposes.

Keywords: *The Impact, Facebook, Academic Performance, Cape Coast University Students.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Advances in Internet technologies have spurred on compelling changes in how we interact, communicate,

learn, and build knowledge. For much of the connected world, it permeates nearly every aspect of our existence from shopping and banking, to communication and education among many other pursuits (Hargadon (2009). In general worldwide Internet users have increased rapidly between 2005 and 2014 (Ioannou, 2009). In 2015, there were 6.5 billion Internet users around the world and in 2014 they became 7.2 billion (Kord & Wolf-Wendel, 2009). The Internet and in particular Facebook applications such as Facebook, YouTube and many others, are obviously “overtaking the world” and could be regarded as “a global consumer phenomenon” (Kord, & Wolf-Wendel, 2009) ,if Facebook were a country it would be the third largest country after China and India and twice as big as the United States of America. According to Facebook statistics “more than 30 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums) are shared each month” and “People on Facebook install 20 million applications everyday (Lenhart & Madden) On YouTube every minute, 12 hours of content are uploaded to the video sharing platform.

It is not surprising that Facebook usage is one of the most common activities among children, adolescents, and emerging adults nowadays. It offers today’s youth a portal for entertainment and communication and it is becoming one of the main platforms for accessing information and news. The Facebook usage of American adults aged 17– 29 years who represent the higher percentage of university students rose from 18 percent in 2005 to 90 percent in 2015 (Eteokleous & Ktoridou, 2011), Also in Egypt, the rate of Facebook users is increasing. Liu, Kalk, Kinney, Orr, & Reid, (2009) mentioned that Facebook users specifically those who are using Facebook have exceeded seven million which is (9.86%) of the population, (46%) of these are between 18-24 years old.. reported that this percentage has increased to 54.6% in 2015; more than 80 percent of

them are young people specifically university students (Eteokleous & Ktoridou, 2011).

This aggressive adoption of Facebook among the younger generation, according to Lenhart & Madden (2007) could be attributed to their up to date knowledge of and comfort with the latest technology and the convenient accessibility to these social networking tools. For instance, they can access Facebook from their cell phones any time any place. This encourages them to use Facebook not only for receiving and retrieving information, but also for being online and connecting with others, and from being from being consumers and participants to “prosumers” which means that they consume and produce media on the Facebook platform (Mazer, Murphy & Simonds, 2007).

The Facebook craze has also hit university and post-secondary institutions, which cannot remain impartial to these rapidly changing Maykut, P., & Morehouse, R. (1994). Putting into consideration how Facebook became embedded within the young generation lifestyle, college student affairs professionals found a way to use Facebook as a method of communication between the college administration and the students (Mazer, Murphy & Simonds, 2007). Furthermore, most of the universities nowadays have an official page or group on one of the Facebook networks where students, lecturers and staff can share resources. Richardson (2009) mentioned that many universities have even established their own Facebook networks in order to help new students to socialize and connect with the faculty members, staff, and alumni and to establish a sense of connection with the institution. Using Facebook networks helps in facilitating the process of knowing more about campus facilities, activities and events especially for the freshman students, and ultimately adjusting to university life.

Researchers found various impact of Facebook use on college students' experiences (Towner. & VanHorn, 2007). Some of the mentioned impact are: enhanced self-esteem Richardson (2009); Selwyn,(2007). as well as the development of identity and peer relationships Kord, Wolf-Wendel (2009) relationship building and maintenance Kord, Wolf-Wendel (2009) higher life fulfilment, social trust, civic engagement, and political as well as perceptions of social and academic integration Shirky, (2003), perceptions of social support Selwyn, (2007). The impact of Facebook on learning and teaching is increasingly considered and debated among higher education scholars, administrators, and stakeholders. Kord, Wolf-Wendel (2009) considered Facebook as one of the game-changers in the realm of learning and instruction. Towner & VanHorn (2007) discussed the implications of Facebook for new types of learners, learning and higher education provision Mazer, Murphy & Simonds (2007) stated that using Facebook

networks in the educational process could help educators to apply the inquiry-based approach and encourage the collaboration between the instructor and the students, thereby encourage engagement. Also important is the potential of these technologies for encouraging independent self-directed learning as well as encouraging students' as active producers of knowledge Mazer, Murphy & Simonds (2007) which once again is commonly regarded as a positive affordance for media. Although a very large community exists online, including Facebook, that focuses on education, this might not be the case for university students Towner & VanHorn (2007) even though the majority of students are active users on Facebook networks, 80 percent of them do not use Facebook for academic purposes Wheeler & Weeler (2009). Liu, Kalk, Kinney, Orr & Reid (2009). are some of the researchers that emphasize that the affordances of technologies might have severe negative consequences on “social networks addicts.” They, for example, fear that “social networks grab the total attention and concentration of the students and divert them towards non educational, unethical, and inappropriate actions such as useless chatting, time killing by random searching “(p. 403).

Statement of the Problem

Kord , Wolf-Wendel (2009) are an example of educators that suggested that using media technology can help students enhance their academic performance. Yet, many educators and parents are worried that their children and students are spending too much time using Facebook networks. Some institutions and instructors ban the use of Facebook in classrooms believing that it negatively impacts students' attention, engagement, and accordingly their GPA.

Liu., Kalk, Kinney,Orr, & Reid (2009) indicated that the essentialist view that new technological innovations (especially Facebook) disrupt higher education delivery ride on educators' risk averse attitudes toward full scale adoption of unproven technologies. However, this unsubstantiated logic forecloses possibilities for embracing the constructive dimensions of disruptions, and grasping the tremendous academic potential of emerging technologies.” (p.132). The results of previous research is not conclusive, with some studies suggesting a negative impact for Facebook, and others suggesting promising opportunities for engagement. Over generalizations regarding the impact of Facebook are obviously not justified. More needs to be discovered about the variables that influence this relationship and about strategies that help students, faculty, and higher education institutions harness the full potential of these pervasive technologies. The study aims to uncover some of these factors. Culture and context also play an important role in the adoption and usage of innovation.

The study answers the following questions:

1. To what extent do undergraduate students at the Cape Coast University use Facebook for academic-related purposes?
2. How do students perceive the impact of Facebook on their academic engagement and performance?

The Concept of Facebook

Eteokleous & Ktoridou (2011) defined Facebook as “Internet based applications that allow the creation and exchange of content which is user generated” (p.69). They stated that Facebook as a worldwide discussion system that allowed Internet users to post public messages; and also when Bruce and Susan

Eteokleous & Ktoridou (2011), users at this time were considered consumers not participants. It was mentioned in Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) study Crook & Harrison, (2008), afterwards, Web 2.0, representing the second stage of the Internet development namely “User Generated Content (UGC)”, Internet users were transformed from being consumers and participants to “prosumers” which means that they consume and produce media (Crook & Harrison, 2008). These new affordances are what made the applications and dynamic interaction of social networking possible. Some of the common features that qualify a tool to be considered a social networking site are: enabling users to communicate with each other in an easy way and allowing users to exchange information, pictures and messages (Crook & Harrison, 2008).

While Facebook networks collect a lot of personal data about the users, they also afford the privacy of the users. For example, the visibility of the online profiles depends on the Facebook network website privacy terms and conditions Crook, & Harrison (2008). mentioned that LinkedIn controls what the user can display and see according to the user’s subscription and paid fees. On the contrary, Facebook users’ profiles are available to all other users in the same network, unless a profile owner decides to change the privacy options. Moreover, private messaging, comments and friends features differ from one Facebook network website to another depending on the feature and user base Charnigo & Barnett-Ellis (2007).

With all the features Facebook are providing, they have facilitated the lives of millions of people. Although they are easily accessible and despite the tremendous opportunities they offer, Facebook can have their drawbacks. Issues of privacy, detachment from reality and being the target of advertisers are some of the main concerns. However, they are creating a new communication landscape that is yet to be discovered and used.

Influence of Facebook on Students’ Academic Performance

Using Facebook to enhance the learning process can take a number of forms, target various skills, and utilize different tools. University educators propose that Facebook can have a positive influence on interaction, engagement, knowledge building, and sense of community (Charnig & Barnett-Ellis(2007). However there is also research that shows that these same tools can distract learners from their studies, and encourage procrastination and superficial thinking.

Studies generally imply that Facebook is mainly used by college students to socialize rather than for academic pursuits. Charnigo & Barnett-Ellis (2007) found out that college students around the age of 22 with accounts on Myspace or Facebook use these systems “to keep in touch with old friends” (94.0%), “to keep in touch with my present friends (91.7%), “to post/look at pictures” (58.4%), “to make new friends” (54.4%), and “to locate old friends” (54.5%). But only 10.8 percent stated that they used it “for academic purposes”, and only 13.9 percent listed their courses on their profiles. Similarly Arrington, (2005,) used a mixed-method approach to investigate the relationship between online academic disclosure (namely status updates about their academic experiences) and academic performance for 281 students with an average age of 23 years. Thematic analysis of their posts indicated that 15% of their contributions to Facebook were academic in nature. On the other hand, the majority of students (Arrington, 2005) used Facebook for academic purposes.

Several studies suggest that the time spent on Facebook takes away from the time available for studying. Hargadon,(2009) investigated to role of Facebook on academic performance of 109 Saudi students. Survey data revealed that Twitter was the most popular social network followed by Facebook. The average number of hours spent by students on Facebook was 29.3 hours. Sixty six percent of the respondents acknowledged that excessive use of Facebook negatively impacted their performance, and indicated that 12 hours per week of use would ensure that their academic performance is not negatively impacted. Hargadon,(2009) noted that some students do not have control on their Facebook while engaged in academic activities, and that they spend more time on these networks than they do studying or sleeping. They point out that empirical research suggests the negative impact of multitasking, or attempting to simultaneously process different sources of information, on performance. They underscore that this leads to increased study time and an increased number of mistakes on assignments. Hargadon, S. (2009). examines the relationship between Facebook activity, time taken for class preparation and overall GPA for 1839 students. Hierarchical linear regression analyses indicated that time spent on Facebook was significantly negatively correlated with overall GPA, but only weakly related to

time spent on class preparation. Moreover, using Facebook to search for information was a positive predictor of GPA while time spent on socializing was a negative predictor.

Some studies delve deeper into the phenomenon of spending too much time on Facebook and almost portray it as a coping mechanism. Ioannou,(2009) for example, did not believe that it impacted their academic performance negatively. Those who did report a negative influence explained Facebook as a strategy for guiltless postponement. The path analysis conducted by Ioannou (2009) mentioned earlier, for example, determined that academic performance was a predictor of Facebook use rather than the opposite. Students with low GPA are more active on Facebook than students with high GPA; one of the reasons of this is the fact that students, who are facing academic or social problems turn to Facebook as a way of distraction from the difficulties that they are facing. Similarly,

Eteokleous & Ktoridou (2011), in a study about the self-reported executive functioning associated with academic procrastination by distributing a thirty minutes questionnaire on 216 university students, showed that there is a relationship between Facebook use, procrastination and poor academic performance, between 32 to 64 percent of college students stated that they use Facebook to procrastinate on their academic duties and socialize or surf the internet.

Very few studies have investigated variables that might impact how, when, and to what extent students used Facebook. Eteokleous & Ktoridou (2011), conducted an exploratory survey study to examine if and how 112 undergraduate and 119 graduate students in public US University used Facebook, and how this usage related to hours of studying and GPA. The survey they used also elicited information about students' own perceptions on Facebook use. Facebook users reported lower GPA and fewer hours studying. Users and nonusers did not however differ in terms of the amount of time they spent on the Internet, but their studying strategies differed. These results held regardless of student status (whether they were an undergraduate or graduate) or their major (humanities, social sciences, medical, STEM or business). The study also suggested that personality and hours spent working are related to Facebook use.

Arrington (2005, conducted a study in four universities to investigate the impact of Facebook on campus life at four higher education institutions, analyzing the responses of 5534 students. He found significant relationships between time spent on Facebook, and several demographic variables. Females spent significantly more time on Facebook. Students with a GPA of 2.89 or less reported being longer on Facebook than those with a higher GPA. Also, students who are in their first and second years of undergraduate study spend

more time using Facebook than those in their third year – the majority of the third year students (almost 78%) spent less than 35 minutes on day using it.

Arrington, 2015 underscored the importance of social and relational factors in for educational attainment within higher education. They examined the impact of the connectedness afforded by Facebook tools on the performance of students within desperate disciplines of study – creative and non-creative – at the bachelor's level, 78 students participated from the business administration and management discipline which is considered as non-creative and 79 students participated from the industrial design engineering discipline which is considered as creative. The results of their study suggested that close social ties within the network of their discipline helped students within the non-creative discipline perform better. The same was not true for the creative discipline in which the relationship between social ties and performance was inversely proportional.

A few studies suggested a more positive potential for Facebook, but also the variation of how students interacted and perceived these tools Eteokleous, & Pavlou, (2010). investigated this relationship in the Nigerian context. The responses of 596 students to a survey revealed that 96% of students used Facebook networks. Facebook was the most popular social network site, followed by “2go” and YouTube. The majority of students (94%) spent less than 5 hours a day on social networks. A quarter of the students reported that they believed that Facebook impacted their academic performance positively, 33% indicated that it impacted it negatively; the rest though it had no effect. About 78% of the students reported that they used it for academic assignments.

Eteokleous & Pavlou (2010) pointed out the potential of Facebook to develop students' self-directed learning skills because they give students a platform to explore subjects and gather information through accessing existing data on the web or interacting with like-minded students to constructively exchange ideas and build knowledge through informal and formal activities. Eteokleous & Pavlou (2010) however note that little is known about how these informal learning opportunities are harnessed and about the characteristics of the students who engage in these activities. To examine these relationships, they conducted three studies to investigate academic knowledge exchange via StudiVZ, an equivalent to Facebook on 784 users of StudiVZ students. The sample consisted of 698 women and 376 men between 19 and 29 years, which is a typical age range for German students. Analysis revealed that one fifth of students employed this Facebook tool to build knowledge. However, the majority, especially freshman, used it for social purposes such as networking and getting oriented to the university environment. The

researchers concluded that knowledge exchange and social functions for using social networks should be regarded as intertwined rather than mutually exclusive. Crook & Harrison (2008) employed an ethnographic approach to examine the impact of Facebook on meaningful learning and pedagogical strategies. To do that they examined the Facebook postings of students and instructors enrolled in an Information Systems course within the South African context. The results of the study showed that 169 participants posted 158 wall posts, 128 discussion board posts, and 169 posts to the administrator's inbox over two semesters. The researcher concluded that Facebook constituted a collaborative "safe" "third space" that facilitated student expression, the development of learning communities, and encouraged knowledge construction. On the other hand, he suggested that postings fell short of manifesting deeper levels of conceptual engagement and learning. Crook & Harrison (2008) examined the impact of twitter on university students' engagement and GPA. Using an experimental design, students from a first year pre-health seminar were assigned to an experimental group (N=76) in which Twitter was used for a variety of academic activities and a control group (N=59). The analysis of engagement and GPA via an ANOVA test showed that students in the experimental group were significantly more engaged and had a higher GPA. Analysis of Twitter postings also reflected that high level of engagement on behalf of students and faculty. They concluded that Facebook has no negative impact on student academic performance if they learned to allocate their time effectively.

A number of the above studies suggest a negative relationship between Facebook use and student academic performance. However, several of the above studies imply that it is not the time you spend on Facebook or the Internet that could be related to a low GPA (e.g., Crook, C., & Harrison, C. (2008) but there might be some underlying factors such as the activities that you engage in during that time and how you manage your studying time, etc Charnigo & Barnett-Ellis (2007). A number of the above studies also show that the effect might differ according to the students' academic statuses and the academic discipline Charnigo & Barnett-Ellis (2007).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As was previously mentioned, Facebook offers today's youth a portal for entertainment and communication and it is becoming one of the main platforms for accessing information and news. This study aims to explore the undergraduate students' perception of using Facebook on their academic performance and relate it to their actual academic performance, the results will reveal whether they have control over their Facebook consumption or not. Uses and gratification approach identifies the needs and motives behind online media usage. According to Burnett et al. (2003). the theory was developed by Elihu Katz in the early 1970's Uses and gratification theory suggests that Facebook users have power over their media consumption and assume an active role in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives and that they are responsible for choosing media to meet their desires and needs to achieve gratification Burnett et al. (2003). Uses and gratification of the Facebook approach focuses on why and how people use Facebook to satisfy their needs (Boyd-Franklin, (2003).

This study aims to explore to what extent do undergraduate students using Facebook in academic related purposes and whether it affects them positively or negatively. Connectivism learning approach emphasizes the role of Facebook context in how learning occurs and explains how Internet technologies have created new opportunities for people to learn and share information across the World Wide Web and among themselves (Baker, 1999). Connectivism theory suggests that students are encouraged to seek out information on their own online and express what they find and that learning may reside in non-human appliances. Connectivism suggests that the use of technology to help individuals to be connected with knowledge and information ought to improve the learning process not vice versa (Eteokleous, 2009).

3. METHODOLOGY

The population in this research was undergraduate students at the cape coast university. The research employed a quantitative approach. The total population included 877 registered undergraduate students in Computer Science, Social Sciences, Tourism, Science Education, Economics, Science Education and Business Administration). The numbers and percentages of all registered undergraduate students was obtained through the Academic Affairs Office in the university, classified by programme and gender, outlined in Table 1 below. The aim for obtaining this information was to evaluate the representativeness of the sample of students

Table 1: Cape Coast University Undergraduate Students

Major	# of Students	Males	Females
BEd Social Science	123	80.6%	19.4%
BA Social Science	52	77.4%	22.6%
Computer Science	50	94.1%	5.8%
Tourism	76	68.8%	31.2%
Economics	80	70.4%	29.6%
Science Education	223	88.8%	11.2%
Business Administration	273	56.9%	43.1%
Total	877	73.9%	26.1%

The researcher adopted a Facebook Performance of Students Questionnaire. The researcher checked the reliability of the research instrument which was determined using a split half test using the odd and even numbered items to form the two halves. The two halves were administered to a sample of students from a university not selected for the main study. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. A co-efficient value of 0.65 indicated that the research instrument was reliable Almutka, Punie, & Ferrari (2009). The researcher chose this survey because it was the only available survey that is addressing the same population (undergraduate students), moreover, it was also made to test the relationship between the Facebook networks usage and the student’s academic performance. In light of those two reasons, the researcher thought that using this

instrument will give adequate answers to the research questions.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A consists of 7 questions and elicits demographic information. Section B consists of 22 likert-scale questions that elicited information about the students use of Facebook: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD)

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The collected quantitative data were scored, coded and inserted into SPSS, and were analyzed using multiple statistical descriptive and inferential statistical tests based on the research question and the nature of the data to be analyzed using frequency tables, crosstabs, Anovas, post hocs and t-tests.

Table 2: Responses on the students’ usage of Facebook for academic related purposes

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I engage in academic discussions on Facebook platforms	13.50% 57	19% 80	37.40% 158	17.10% 72	13% 55
I make use of Facebook or alternatives to share information with my classmates	49.30% 208	23.20% 98	11.10% 47	8.80% 37	7.60% 32
I follow the latest developments in my field through Facebook	28.70% 121	23.20% 98	27% 114	13.50% 57	7.60% 32

I solely rely on information gotten from Facebook to do my assignments without consulting other sources	9% 38	14.50% 61	25.60% 108	24.60% 104	26.30% 111
Engaging in academic forums on Facebook confuses me	8.10% 34	10.20% 43	38.40% 162	22.70% 96	20.60% 87
Sometimes I use Facebook to understand what I have been taught in class	27.30% 115	20.90% 88	25.80% 109	11.80% 50	14.20% 60
Facebook is encouraged by lecturers	12.60% 53	18% 76	35.50% 150	19.40% 82	14.50% 61

as part of class assignments

We have a Facebook group for some of my courses	52.10% 220	22% 93	13.70% 58	4.70% 20	7.30% 31
I have to use Facebook extensively because most of my course assignments/projects are in the forms of blogs/online presentations	21.10% 89	24.40% 103	30.60% 129	15.20% 64	8.80% 37
I communicate with the lecturer through social media	16.80% 71	19.90% 84	25.80% 109	17.50% 74	19.90% 84

Table 2 shows that the majority of the participants have chosen the categories “agree to strongly agree” for two statements. For instance, the percentage of “I make use of facebook or alternatives to share information with my classmates” is (72.5%),

“We have a Facebook group for some of my courses” is (74.1%). About 16% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the first statement and 12% with the second, whereas the rest were neutral. The qualitative results implies that the majority of the students use Facebook networks as a communication platform due to the various number of available features and benefits. For example, they can reach each other easily and quickly via facebook groups whether by texting, voice notes or video calls.

Almost half of the students agreed to strongly agreed with the following statements: “I follow the latest developments in my field through Facebook” (51.9%); “Sometimes I use Facebook to understand what I have been taught in class” (48.2%); and “I have to use Facebook extensively because most of my course assignments/projects are in the forms of blogs/online presentations” (45.5%). For the first statement, almost 25% disagreed and the rest were neutral. The same trend was noticed for the second statement. For the third statement, disagreement was slightly lower, and those who chose the “neutral” choice reached 30 percent. The results of the last statement slightly conflict with those of another statement, Facebook is encouraged by lecturers as part of class assignments”, to which only about 30% of students agreed or strongly agreed. About 25 percent

disagreed and the rest were neutral. The latter results mirrored those of the statement “I engage in academic discussions on Facebook platforms” to which 32.5% agreed or strongly agreed. About 20% of students disagreed to this latter statement, and about 37% were neutral. Also with reference to academic forums via Facebook, only 18.3% of students reported that “Engaging in academic forums on Facebook confuses me”. Over 43% disagreed with that statement and about 39% were neutral. These results are mostly good, partially bad.

On the contrary, table 2 shows that the minority of participants selected the categories “agree to strongly agree” on five statements, such as “I engage in academic discussions on Facebook platforms” amounted (32.5%), “I solely rely on information gotten from Facebook to do my assignments without consulting other sources” is (23.5%), “Engaging in academic forums on Facebook confuses me” is (18.3%), “Facebook is encouraged by lecturers as part of class assignments” is (30.6%) and “I communicate with the lecturer through Facebook” counts (36.7%).

It was also noted that the table demonstrates that a large number of participants picked out the categories “disagree to strongly disagree” for two statements: “I solely rely on information gotten from Facebook to do my assignments without consulting other sources” (50.9%). Only about 25% agreed with this statement, and the rest of the students opted for the neutral choice.

Table 3: Responses on the impact of Facebook on the students' academic engagement and performance

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The time I spend online on social networks takes away from my time studying	15.20% 64	21.80% 92	34.10% 144	19.20% 81	9.70% 41
Online social networks distract me from my studies	13.50% 57	23.20% 98	32.50% 137	21.60% 91	9.20% 39
The hours I spend online on Facebook are more than the hours I spend reading university stated content	32.70% 138	22.50% 95	21.10% 89	11.80% 50	11.80% 50
My unlimited access to Facebook through my cell phone distracts me in class	10% 42	13.70% 58	21.10% 89	23.50% 99	31.80% 134
Facebook have impacted my GPA positively	11.40% 48	15.20% 64	42.20% 178	22.30% 94	9% 38
Facebook have impacted my GPA negatively	7.60% 32	17.80% 75	27.30% 115	26.30% 111	21.10% 89
The usage of Facebook for class related research has helped improve my grades	16.80% 71	19.40% 82	36.50% 154	18.70% 79	8.50% 36
Facebook has negatively impacted my writing skills	12.30% 52	10% 42	17.80% 75	22.30% 94	37.70% 159
I will not perform well in my academics even if I stop using Facebook	14.20% 60	13.50% 57	28.90% 122	19.20% 81	24.20% 102
Facebook has improved my communication skills	28% 118	24.40% 103	26.30% 111	10% 42	11.40% 48
Once I interrupt my study time with social media, I lose concentration	27% 114	23.20% 98	27.70% 117	13.50% 57	8.50% 36

A high proportion from the participants in Table 3 selected the categories “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. For instance, the percentage of “Facebook have impacted my GPA negatively” is (47.4%), “Facebook have impacted my GPA positively” is 26.6%. For the first statement, 25.4% agreed and 27.3% were neutral. As for the second statement, 26.6% agreed and 42.2% were neutral. It was noticed that a high percentage of students disagreed

about the negative impact of Facebook on their academic performance and a low percentage of students disagreed about the positive impact of Facebook on their academic performance. However, a high percentage of students were neutral about the second statement and a low percentage of students were neutral about the first statement. The qualitative results show different opinions from those who are not academically affected

by Facebook and those who are affected positively and negatively.

Almost half of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following statements: “I will not perform well in my academics even if I stop using Facebook” (43%), “My unlimited access to Facebook through my cell phone distracts me in class” (55.3%). For the first statement, 27.7% agreed and the rest were neutral. The same trend was noticed for the second statement.

On the other hand, table 3 shows that almost half of the students were within the categories “agree” to “strongly agree” for instance, the percentage of “The hours I spend online on Facebook are more than the hours I spend reading university stated content” is (55.2%), “Once I interrupt my study time with Facebook, I lose concentration” is (50.2%); and “Facebook has improved my communication skills” (52.4%). For the first

statement, 23% disagreed and the rest were neutral. The same trend was noticed for the second statement. For the third statement, disagreement was slightly lower, and those who chose the “neutral” choice reached almost 22%.

It was also noted that table 3 demonstrates that a small number of students picked out the categories “agree to strongly agree” to three statements with reference to Facebook negative impact: 30% of students reported that “The time I spend online on social networks takes away from my time studying”, 36.7% reported that “Online social networks distract me from my studies”; and 22.3% reported that “Facebook has negatively impacted my writing skill”. For the first two statements, almost 30% disagreed and the rest were neutral. For the third statement, disagreement was higher, it reached (59.9%) and the rest were neutral.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test for Academic status and engagement in academically related Facebook activities

Asymptotic Significance			
	Value	df	
(2-sided)			
Pearson Chi-Square	26.707 ^a	12	.009
Likelihood Ratio	25.945	12	.011
N of Valid Cases	422		

*4 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.65.

The results of the chi square analysis revealed a significant association between academic status and having a Facebook group for some of the courses, $X^2(1, N = 422) = 26.707, p = .009$

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aims to shed the light on the Facebook impact on the academic performance of university students in cape coast and aims to clarify to different stakeholders the relationship between the Facebook usage and academic performance and to harness full potential of Facebook. Interestingly, this study shows that there are three different students opinion of the Facebook effect

on their academic performance, according to the survey analysis The discussion and the results show that the relationship between the Facebook use and the academic performance depends on the students’ usage of Facebook. This explains the negative correlation between the students’ academic GPA and the time they spend on Facebook, which can be addressed by increasing the students’ awareness about the Facebook addiction impact. Furthermore, the results of the present study show that the majority of the participants use Facebook for academic related purposes as a means of communication, they use it connect with their colleagues in order to discuss class related contents. Higher education institutions in Ghana may utilize this in creating a semiformal Facebook networks to be monitored by teaching assistants to better assist the students and to ensure the credibility of the exchanged information between students. Also, faculty might consider harnessing on this engagement with Facebook,

and think of ways to creatively engage students with class content. Facebook awareness for students is needed to address the Facebook addiction issue. Significant differences in the behavior of students from different academic backgrounds and different academic status in perceiving and using Facebook emerged which might require further investigation. Also, using Facebook as a communication platform in discussing course related content falls with the development of communities of learners which is seemingly on high demand, this area might require further study.

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