

EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA UTILIZATION ON STUDENTS OF IGNATIUS AJURU UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION BASED ON GENDER

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Abstract

The study investigated the use of social media by students of Faculty of Education of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt based on gender. To achieve the objective of the study, a research question and a null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. The study employed the survey research design. A total of 626 students constituted both the population and sample size of the study. The researcher developed an instrument titled: Gender and Use of Social Media (GUSMQ) Questionnaire. The instrument has a reliability index of .78 determined using Cronbach alpha reliability package in SPSS 17. The instrument was administered personally by the researcher with the help of two trained research assistants. Data generated from the field were analysed using Mean, Standard Deviation for the research question. The hypothesis was tested using t-test at .05 level of significance. The findings showed that the null hypothesis that says there is no significant difference in the use of social media by students of Ignatius Ajuru University based on gender was rejected. It was recommended that the university management should design and develop appropriate social media system to serve as cost effective platform for instructional delivery and interaction between students and lecturers.

Keywords: Social Media, Students, Gender.

The importance of social media to the teaching and learning environment and its use among students in higher institution cannot be over emphasized. In the opinion of Pew Internet (2013), females were users of social networking sites more than their male counterparts. With particular emphasis on Facebook. Maikaslivill and Ujmajuridze (2013) noted that in using Facebook, women give preference to meeting existing friends and sharing pictures while men prefer making new relationships and passing time. Perl, Roth and Miller (2012) reported that the majority of Facebook's 845 million users are women and that women are responsible for 62% of activity on the site in terms of status updates, message and writing comments. In view of the above, Christina (2013) states that men and women use social media differently and that generally women use social Networking sites more with 71%, compared to 62% of men. On a general note, Adediran and Kehinde (2013) and Olaleke, Iroju and Olajide (2015) state that there are gender differences in social networking use as female students tend to participate more in social networking activities than their male counterparts for various purposes such as communication, entertainment as well as academic activities. In contrast to the above, Farah and Yanda (2015) assert that there is no significant difference in the use of social networking sites based on gender.

Gender is an enduring characteristic of students that stands as an important variable which could produce differences in individuals. Gender is intertwined with identity, expression, presentation, relationships and societal role and structure, among other things. As noted by the United Nations (2008) gender refer to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men, girls and boys, as well as the relations between woman and those between men. It is a factor that determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender has been found to produce differences in human beings. It is one of the universal dimensions on which differences are based. This is because men and women are also "specialized" for different tasks (Dholakia, Dholakia and Kshetri, 2003). This difference is equally seen in the use of social networking sites. Going by the related literature on gender use of social networking, results are mixed as to which group spends more time on social media. According to Lin and Subrahmanyam, (2007) earlier studies have revealed that boys have been online more than girls in previous decades because of earlier forms of technology such as video or computer games. However the trend is gradually changing with the advent of social networking sites as Giles and Price (2008)

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reveals that girls were reported to have been active users of social networking for things like chatting and downloading music. Similarly, in a sample of college students, Hargittai (2007) found out that gender appears as a significant predictor in the use and non-use of social networking.

The main purpose of the study is to assess the difference in the use of social media based on gender. One research question and one hypothesis were raised to guide the research.

Research Question

1. Is there any difference in the use of social media by students of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education based on gender?

Hypothesis:

H₀₁ There is no significant difference in the use of social media by students of Ignatius Ajuru University based on gender.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design with 671 respondents as the population which also form the sample of the study. The researchers developed an instrument titled: Gender and Use of Social Media Questionnaire (GUSMQ) which was used for data collection. The instruments have twenty five items and have three sections: A, and B. Section A solicited for respondent's demographic data - Name of the institution, faculty, and course of study, level of study, gender and age. Section B solicited for information on use of social media for learning. The instrument was developed on a four point rating scale of: Very Often (4 points), Often (3 points), Fairly Often (2 points) and Not Often (1 point) for use of social media respectively.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, trial test was conducted using a sample of 40 respondents selected from faculty of Vocational and Technical Education of the same institution. The researchers personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents at their faculty with the help of two research assistants. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient package in SPSS 20.0 was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78 showing that the instruments were reliable and capable of measuring the intended events with consistency.

Copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researchers and research assistants with the help of an introductory letter from the Dean Faculty of education. The instrument administration and collection lasted one week. Out of the 671 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 626 were retrieved with valid responses. The return of the

questionnaire was 94%. Mean and Standard Deviation was used to answer the research question. The hypothesis was **tested using** independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Answering Research Question

Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research question.

Research Question: Is there any difference in the use of social media by students of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education based on gender?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the difference in the use of social media by students of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education based on gender.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean difference
Female	336	16.76	4.26	4.87
Male	290	11.89	4.67	

The result as shown in Table 1 reveals that the mean score of 16.76 obtained by female students is greater than that (11.89) obtained by their male counterparts. This result implies that there is difference in the use of social media by students of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education based on gender with female students using social media more than male students.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the use of social media by students of Ignatius Ajuru University based on gender.

Table 2: t-test analysis of the difference in the use of social media by students of Ignatius Ajuru University based on gender

Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-cal	t-crit	Decision at P< .05
Female	336	16.76	4.62	13.62	1.97 significant
Male	290	11.89	4.67		

*significant at P< .05; df= 624

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The result in Table 2 revealed that the calculated t-value of 13.62 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.97 at .05 level of significance with 624 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says there no significant difference in the use of social media by students of Ignatius Ajuru University based on gender was rejected. This implies that there is difference in the use of social media by students of Ignatius Ajuru University based on gender.

Discussion of Finding

On the effect of gender on the use of social media for learning by students of Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, the finding showed that there was significant difference in the use of social media by students of Ignatius Ajuru University based on gender. This research was supported by the view of Hargittai (2007) that gender appears to be a significant predictor in the use and non-use of social networking sites with females more likely to use social networking sites than males. The finding of the study also agrees with Goudreau, (2010) that women are more inclined to share things about their personal lives and are more likely to make connections through social networking than male. Also, the finding agrees with those of Pew Internet (2013), Adediran and Kehinde (2013) and Olaleke, Iroju and Olajide (2015) that there are gender differences in the use of social networking sites as female students tend to participate more in social networking activities than their male counterparts for various purposes such as communication, entertainment as well as academic activities.

Conclusion

Gender is an enduring characteristic of students that stands as an important variable which could produce differences in individuals. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a significant difference in the use of social media by students of faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University based on gender.

Recommendations

1. The university management should design and develop appropriate social media system to serve as cost effective platform for instructional delivery and interaction between students and students, lecturers and students.
2. Lecturers should also make use of social media platform for instructional delivery process.
3. Students should be encourage to effective use social media platform for academic activities and interaction.

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