Use and Influence of Social Media on Student Performance in Higher Education Institutions in Cameroon

Emergent Research Forum (ERF)

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Abstract

The advent of digital has made it possible to popularize Social Media at all levels, even within Higher Education Institutions. But at the same time, the impact and influence on these social media have all attracted a lot of attention. According to studies by researchers at the University of Maryland in the USA, it appears that students describe their feelings when they must refrain from using social media literally in the same terms associated with alcohol dependence and the drug: cut off from the world, greedy, very anxious, insignificant, some even consider themselves crazy. They concluded that most students are not just reluctant, but totally unable to live and function without Social Media. Given this total addiction, very few studies are interested in this impact on the future and performance of a student, especially those in developing countries who are increasingly addicted to social media. This study examines the influence of social media on student performance in Cameroon. It aims to identify the factors influencing the addictive use of social media among students, and how social media impacts their academic performance in a learning environment. Our research model is built on Extended TAM, Personality Traits and Network reliability. We therefore suggest to adopt a mixed methods research with the sole aim of increasing the literature that already exists on social media and highlighting their use and impact in developing countries.

Keywords

Social Media, TAM, Influence, Quality, Personality Traits, Cameroon.

Introduction

Social media tools represent an important source of value creation for firms across the globe. Indeed, there are billions of users who connect every day on social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.). Most of these users are youths in universities and educational institutions (Badri et al. 2017). An impressive study published in the New York Times Consumer Insight Group revealed in 2014 the impulse of people citing and sharing information on Social Media. This includes a wish to publish valuable and enjoyable content to friends and people around the world, to emerge and maintain a connection with people (Gaitho 2017). These aspects have caused Social Media to progress from being a practical means for communicating with friends and relatives to a life-changing tool (Balakrishnan 2016). Dumpit and Fernandez (2017) identified the level of impact of this new power in all aspects of life. They have an impact on policymakers, on society and its environment, on trade, everyday life, in all instances that affect human life. In his Article “What Is Social Media? Daniel Nations brings a definition of social media as a set of interactive media and information sharing on the web allowing all users to interact and exchange information with other Internet users. Considered by many experts as a communication tool, it is wise to take a closer look at a major aspect of social media in young people’s lives. They are used according to Wessner (2014) as platforms of learning and study support and influences the academic performances of students. They present significant
advantages for students like “Increasing Student Collaboration” “Rich eLearning Media available” and “Real-time news and information discovery” (Draskovic et al. 2017). Social media like Facebook, Twitter and Myspace have become part of the lives of students in the United States (McDonald 2008). MediaMetrie, a company specialized in audience computation and marketing studies on audiovisual and bilateral media in France measured for the first time in 2016 the performance of social networks in Cameroon. Their study revealed that 68.2% of individuals aged 15 and over are registered on a social network, with 75.3% aged between 15 and 24 (Mediametrie 2016). The famous website World Stats points out that in June 2017, among the 6,128,442 internet users in Cameroon, there are 2,100,000 Facebook subscribers. In 2016, Facebook published the ranking of the African countries with the most activity on its social network. The report states that Cameroon is ranked 17th African country with an active community on Facebook. The same report shows that more than one million Cameroonians are registered on Facebook of which 620,000 are male (64%), and 340,000 of them (36%), are female.

Despite the measures taken by the Cameroonian Government to ensure a responsible use of social media by its population, it appears no study has been conducted on the influence and impact of Social Media on student performance. This study proposes a scientific model which is based on existing technology acceptance models and other contextual factors identified in the extant literature. In fact, the proposed research model is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), extended by variables on the quality of the communication network in Cameroon, moderating variables, and personality traits. Coupled with the emerging literature on Social Media, we examine the following research questions.

i. How does the use of social media influence the performance of students in Cameroon?
ii. To what extent does social media addiction influence their academic performance?

Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

In this section, we present a research model and the formulation of related hypotheses. This model will consider various constructs developed in both the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and five factors of the personality traits.

Core constructs

**Perceived Ease of Use:** Davis et al. (1989) define this as the degree to which any user expects any target system to be uncompromising with regard to its usability.

H1a-H1b-H1c: Perceived Ease of Use will have simultaneously an impact on Perceived Usefulness, Attitude and Perceived Satisfaction

**Perceived usefulness:** is defined as the subjective probability of the potential user that manipulation of a specific application system will increase his performance at work in an organizational context (Davis et al. 1989).

H2a- H2b: Perceived usefulness will have an effect on Attitude and Perceived Satisfaction

**Attitude toward using Social Media:** refers to “user’s evaluation of the desirability of his or her using of social Media”(Schneberger et al. 2008).

H3: Attitude will have a positive direct impact on Behavioral Intention to Use Social Media

**Behavioral Intention to Use Social Media:** is defined as “The strength of one’s willingness to use a system”(Ching 2018).

H4: Behavioral Intention to Use Social Media will have positive direct impact on Actual System Use

**Academic Performance:** Academic success or performance is defined as the level of satisfaction of the educational objectives of a student, teacher or institution in the short, medium or long term (Paul et al. 2012).
H5: Actual system Use will have a positive effect on Academic Performance (Alwagait et al. 2015)

**Relational Commitment:** it refers to the inherent craze of an individual to persist in a long-term relationship, which will result in incessant exchanges between individuals in a social network (Agnew et al. 1998).

H6: relational commitment will have positive impact on satisfaction

**Perspectives on Social Media in Education:** It refers to a student's feeling about the use of social media for educational purposes for their enjoyment, with the ability to connect with other students and faculty while creating a learning and quest framework of knowledge (Roblyer et al. 2010).

H7: Perspectives on social media in education will have positive impact on satisfaction

**Perceived Satisfaction:** Al-Azawei and Lundqvist (2015) have defined satisfaction as being the elements of investigation influencing the satisfaction of learners (here students) in understanding the path of success in an e-learning situation.

**Subjective Norm:** defined as the sensation of any person that the majority of people of some importance to him think he should or should not perform the behavior in question (Venkatesh and Davis 2000).

H8: Subjective Norm will have positive direct impact on Behavioral intention to use Social Media

**Perceived Playfulness:** defined as “the act of using a specific system is perceived to be gaiety in its own right, aside from any performance consequences resulting from system use” (Padilla-Meléndez et al. 2013).

H9: Perceived Playfulness will have positive direct impact on Behavioral Intention to use Social Media

**Moderating constructs**

These constructs are modified by socio-demographic factors such as demographic variables and structural variables. These variables refer to individual characteristics that influence perceptions by individuals (Zuiderwijk et al. 2015).

H10a-H10b: Age significantly moderates the relationship between behavioral intention to use social media and actual system use

H11a-H11b: Gender significantly moderates the relationship between behavioral intention to use social media and actual system use

H12a-H12b: Experience significantly moderates the relationship between behavioral intention to use social media and actual system use

**Network reliability:**

H13a-H13b: Network reliability significantly moderates the relationship between Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness (Dumpit and Fernandez 2017)

**Agreeableness:** defined as “individual with good team player in team-based work performance settings and they are friendly, empathic, cooperative, trusting, warm, and considerate” (Özbek et al. 2014).

H14a-H14b: Agreeableness will have positive direct impact on Perceived Usefulness

**Openness:** defined as “individuals intellectually curious, imaginative, willing to entertain new ideas, and open-minded” (Özbek et al. 2014).

H15a-H15b: Openness significantly influence the relationship between Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness
Consciousness: defined as anyone who has difficulty in trusting others in a team atmosphere and in view of their unreliable attitudes they show. He retires and prefers to work alone even when he is aware that the results of his work will be evaluated by other people (Özbek et al. 2014).

H16a-H16b: Consciousness significantly moderates the relationship between Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness

Extraversion: Tili et al. (2016) defines it as the state of a voluble individual, overflowing with energy. Most of the time they are often full of friends and have the ability to freely enter into relationships with people.

H17a-H17b: Extraversion significantly moderates the relationship between Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness

Neuroticism: Özbek et al. (2014) defines it as the state of an individual always concerned more than others and in most of the time in a bad mood, paying more attention to details that make him out of control.

H18a-H18b: Neuroticism significantly moderates the relationship between Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness

Methodology

This article proposes to use a mixed research method to test and analyze the proposed research model. Mixed method research is defined as a method of quantitative and qualitative conceptions in the same research study, developed in response to the observed limitations of quantitative and qualitative conceptions (D. Caruth 2013). As far as this study is concerned, we will start with a quantitative study and then a qualitative study to better understand and justify the results obtained from the quantitative part of the study. This study will be conducted in Higher Education Institutions in Cameroon. We will begin with interviews to gather different opinions on the use of social media and their links to student performance. The next step will be based on a pre-test phase, a pilot study and a scale validity to improve our measurement instruments.

Expected Contribution

This research is expected to contribute to the extant literature on the Use and Influence of Social Media on student performance in higher education institutions in Cameroon. In pursuit of our goal, the use of the mixed research method will be used to allow a better enrichment of the existing literature on the influence of social media and their uses in student life.
REFERENCES


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