

# The Influence of Internet Use on Academic Performance among Undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi Benue State Nigeria

**Yahaya Joel Hussaini**

Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
School of Education  
Aminu Saleh college of Education,  
Azare Bauchi state  
[yahayahussaini5@gmail.com](mailto:yahayahussaini5@gmail.com)

**Daniel Benjamin Saanyol**

Department of Community Health  
IHSAN College of Health Science and Technology Azare, Bauchi state  
[ambassadorben1502@gmail.com](mailto:ambassadorben1502@gmail.com)

**Ungwa Emmanuel Vandekan**

Department of Psychology  
School of Postgraduate  
Nasarawa State University Keffi  
[Ungwa1992@gmail.com](mailto:Ungwa1992@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

*This study was carried out to examine the influence of internet use on academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design; the sample for the study consisted of 117 (55.7%) male and 93 (44.30%) females, with the age range of 18-32, (mean = 24.57, SD = 4.02) participant. Internet use was measured with the internet access scale while academic performance was measured using students' last CGPA. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Independent t-test. Findings showed that there is a significant negative relationship between internet use and academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi,  $r(208) = -.73, p < .01$  and there is a significant sex difference in academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State university, Makurdi  $t(208 \text{ df}) = 16.58, p < .01$ . It was concluded that internet use had a significant negative relationship to students' academic performance. It was therefore recommended that internet use be included in secondary and tertiary school curriculum in order to aid students seek educational materials, as well as educate students to spend more time in search of useful and educational materials that will positively developed their academic performance.*

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**Keywords:** Internet use, Social media, Academic Performance and undergraduates.

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## Introduction

Education is a primary need in this era of globalization. Education not only gives insight, it also grooms the personality, inculcates moral values, add knowledge and gives skill (Musarat, Sundus, Faqiha, Fozia & Ayesha, 2013). The world is making progress day by day because education is the only key to match the pace of its progress. People are giving preference to higher education. The quality of students' performance remains at the top priority for educators (Musarat, et al, 2013). Some factors have been found to be related to students' academic

performance; among other factors is internet use (Anjugu, 2013; Onyeka, Sajoh & Bulus, 2013; Buhari, Ahmad & HadiAsara, 2014 & Caplan, 2005).

The Internet is a very essential part of modern day life affecting various aspects such as shopping, travelling, electronic mails and education. Though activities on the Internet can span a wide range of viable activities, the sad thing is that a very large number of people (majority of youths and teenagers, which make the student population) use it for just social networking (Samson, Okewole, Oguntunde & Godspower. 2017).

According to some previous research, it has been estimated that more than 90% of undergraduates use social networks (Tariq & Mehboob, 2012). A number of social networking sites are available on the Internet. The most popular among them include Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Skype (Samson, Okewole, Oguntunde & Godspower. 2017). Wang, Chen & Liang, (2011), conducted an exploratory research study that drew a random sample of 48 males and females and administered a student perception questionnaire on how social media usage affects University students. 35% of the participants were undergraduates and 65% were graduate students of the Johnson and Wales University. In the research, an anonymous questionnaire was administered to collect data from the respondents. 60% of the participants favoured Facebook, 22% Skype, 10% use Twitters and 8% had a preference for Myspace. 45% of the sample disclosed that they spent 6-8 hours per day to check a social media site, 23% spent more than 8 hours, 20% spent 2-4 hours and only 12% spent less than 2 hours. The ratio of participants who post or respond to messages during School hours was 64%; 15% rarely used social media during School hours while 21% were not sure if they would like to use it. In the same vein, 90% of the respondents said that they post or respond while completing homework, 8% would never use social media while doing homework while 2% were not sure. In terms of the benefits of social media, 20% agreed that social media help with School assignments; 25% agreed that social media helps to make new friends and 55% just used social media for fun. On the other hand Anjugu (2013) observed that a great deal of students in the University of Abuja are aware of social media, often online, and, due to the frequency of time spent on social media, experiencing setbacks in academic performance.

In the research of Onyeka, Sajoh & Bulus, (2013), a survey of students' use of social networking sites and how it affects them was undertaken. The results showed that the students use social networking sites mostly for keeping in touch, although, a majority indicated that they used them mostly for academic activities. Similarly, a research that analysed the application of social media amongst students of Kaduna Polytechnic was conducted by (Buhari, Ahmad & HadiAsara, 2014). The study showed that students regard social media as an efficient platform for accomplishing academic excellence on one hand, and social media have an effect on students' study patterns on the other hand. Consequently, using the Internet will result in the displacement of academic activities, as television once did, and will eventually decrease the students' academic achievement as held by Koshal, Koshal & Gupta, (1996), Aderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, Wright, & Larson (2001), Shin (2004), and Shejwal and Purayidathil (2006). Researchers have further reported that problematic Internet use among adolescents brings negative outcomes in school performance, as well as to social skills (Caplan, 2005).

Academic performance differences between males and females at the high school level have become apparent in recent years. Females have steadily out-performed males in academic subject areas (Sparks and Olivia 2007). Similarly, Duckworth & Seligman, (2006) asserted that Female students seem to have a better academic performance than male students. Previous research shows females get better course grades than males even in traditionally male content areas, such as physics and math, but males score higher on ability tests in these subjects

(Kimball 1989; Wentzel 1988). Previous studies have also shown that females have better memory in general than males, and this includes all types of memory: episodic, spatial, short-term, visual, and specific memories such as odor and early memories (Halpern 2000). This may help explain why females perform better in school than males. Males are three to five times more likely than females to have stuttering, dyslexia, and other language disorders (Bannatyne 1976; Gordon 1980; Sutaria 1985). Standardized achievement tests also show that females are better at spelling and perform better on tests of literacy, writing, and general knowledge (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). On the other hand, Colom and Lynn (2004) asserted that males have larger average brain sizes than females and therefore, would be expected to have higher average IQs. Young and Fislser (2000) examining SAT-M scores of high school seniors, found males to score better than females. Adigwe (1993) in a research that investigated gender differences in chemical problem solving among Nigeria secondary school chemistry students, male students scored higher than their female counterparts did. According to Samson, Okewole, Oguntunde & Godspower (2017) education is a very essential part of an individuals' life. For youths, education should be more important than anything, unfortunately, this is not the case. Today's youth would rather spend more time on a social network site engaging in unproductive actions than involve themselves with productive tasks (Tariq & Mehboob, 2012); therefore, this present study deems it fit to investigate the influence of internet use on academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State university.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study aims at assessing the influence of internet use on academic performance of Benue State University students with the view to red-flagging the academics on its implications.

### **Objectives of the study**

The following are the objectives of the study:

- i.** To find out if there will be no significant relationship between internet use and students' academic performance among undergraduates of Benue state University
- ii.** To determine if there will be no significant gender difference on academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University.
- iii.** To recommend the way forward as to the use of internet among university students.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions were put forward to guide the study

- i.** Will there be no significant relationship between internet use and students' academic performance among undergraduates of Benue state University?
- ii.** Will there be no significant gender difference on academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University?

### **Hypotheses:**

The following hypotheses were postulated for the study

- Ho1.** There is no significant relationship between internet use and students' academic performance among undergraduates of Benue state University.
- Ho2.** There is no significant gender difference on academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University.

### **Methodology**

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design to obtain data on the influence of internet use on academic performance among Benue State University Undergraduates.

## Population

The population of this study comprised of all undergraduates of Benue State University. A stratified random sampling method was employed by the researchers to select 210 participants for the study. The sample of the study consisted of 117 (55.7%) males and 93 (44.3%) female undergraduates with an age range of 18-32 years as well as a mean age of 24.57 and SD of 4.02. Out of the 210 participants; 23 (10.0%) were 100 level students; 77 (36.7%) were 200 level; 47 (22.4%) were 300 level; 52 (24.8%) were 400 level while 11 (5.2%) were 500 level students. As for their access to internet, 195 (92.9%) have access to internet while 15 (7.1%) have no access to the use of internet

## Instrument

The study adopted the Internet Access/perceived Academic Performance Scale; a questionnaire on internet developed by University of Bath, Greenwich Glasgow Caledoniaian, Loughborogh and the West of England (2003). The questionnaire tested frequency of internet use: 1-4, internet use, 5-13, and internet identification 14-23. The questionnaire has two sections (A and B); section A deal with Bio-data and has 7 items which was used to determined their age, sex, level of study, access to net and last CGPA. Section B has 23 items were used to measure the influence of internet use on academic performance among undergraduate.

## Procedure

The researchers personally handed the questionnaire to each participant; most of the respondents were met in their various departmental parks while other were met in the lecture rooms in Benue State University, Makurdi. The researcher made sure that each student could participate on a voluntary basis. The participants had as much time as he/she wanted to complete the questionnaire. After the participants finished responding to the questionnaire, the researchers retrieved them for analysis

## Method of data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the bio-data of the respondents. This includes frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. On the other hand, inferential statistics involving Pearson's product moment correlation and independent t-test were used to test the hypotheses.

## Results

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between internet use and academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi.

**Table 1: Pearson's product moment correlations showing the relationship between internet use and academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi.**

Variable	N	X	SD	DF	r	P
Internet Use	210	56.10	13.70	208	-.73	.000
LCGPA (Academic Performance)	210	2.75	.69			

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

The result presented in Table 1 showed that there is a significant negative relationship between internet use and academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi  $r(208) = -.73, P < 0.01$ . This implies that when internet use increase there will be decrease in academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi. Based on this result, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** there is no significant gender difference in academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi.

**Table 2: Showing test of gender difference on academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi.**

Sex	N	X	SD	DF	t	P
Male	117	3.21	.431	208	16.58	.000
Female	93	2.16	.483			

0.01 level (2-tailed)

The result presented in Table 2 showed that there is a significant gender difference in academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi  $t(208) = 16.58, P < 0.01$ . The result further indicates that males students obtained higher mean scores on academic performance (mean=3.21, SD=.483) compared to their female counterparts (mean=2.16, SD=.431) respectively. This implies that male undergraduates have high academic performance than their female counterpart. Based on this result, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

## Discussion

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between internet use and students' academic performance among undergraduates of Benue state University. The result shows that there is a significant negative relationship between internet use and academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi. This implies that when internet use such as social networking sites increase there will be decrease in academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi. This result is in congruent with previous findings by Anjugu (2013) who observed that due to the frequency of time spent on social media, experiencing setbacks in academic performance among university study; Buhari, Ahmad & Hadi Asara, (2014) position that students regard social media as an efficient platform for accomplishing academic excellence on one hand, and social media have an effect on students' study patterns on the other hand.

**Hypotheses two:** There is no significant gender difference on academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University. The result showed that there is a significant gender difference in academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi; the result further indicates that male students obtained higher mean scores on academic performance compared to their female counterparts respectively. This implies that male undergraduates have high academic performance than their female counterpart. This finding is in consonance with the findings of previous studies by Colom and Lynn (2004) who established that males have larger average brain sizes than females and therefore, would be expected to have higher average IQs. The present study finding agrees with Young and Fisler



(2000) that males to score better than females. This current finding aligns with Adigwe (1993) finding that male students scored higher than their female counterparts did. On the contrary, Females have steadily out-performed males in academic subject areas (Sparks and Olivia 2007). The present study also refute previous finding by Duckworth Seligman, (2006) who put forward that female students seem to have a better academic performance than male students

### Conclusion

From the findings, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- There is a significant negative relationship between internet use and academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi which implies that when internet use increase there will be decrease in academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi
- There is a significant gender difference in academic performance among undergraduates of Benue State University, Makurdi which implies that male undergraduates have high academic performance than their female counterpart.

### Recommendations

Base on the findings the study recommended that:

- Educators, Counsellors, Psychologists, Parents and Researchers to develop strategies to help students creating a balance between times spent online and that spent on academic activities which may help to increase their academic performance.
- Internet use education should be included in secondary and tertiary school curriculum in order to aid students understands more productive ways of using the internet towards better academic performance.
- All learners should be given equal opportunities and the same level of encouragement irrespective of their gender

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