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THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ECONOMICS STUDENTS: A MULTINOMIAL LOGIT ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Social networking sites (SNSs) are popular amongst university students in Uganda. However, questions remain whether the use of these sites affects academic performance. This study aimed at analyzing the influence of SNSs on the academic outcomes of Economics students at Makerere University. The research employed a cross-sectional survey design in which data were collected using a questionnaire. The analysis was based on a sample of 297 second and third-year undergraduate Economics students. A multinomial logit model was used in data analysis. In the analysis, attitude and use of SNSs in learning Economics positively predicted a student's cumulative grade point average (CGPA). Also, subscribing to a wide range of SNSs positively affected a student's CGPA. The frequency of use of SNSs during the lectures was on the other hand associated with a decline in grades among the sampled respondents.

KEYWORDS

academic performance, multinomial logit model, social networking sites.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Concern over the influence of social networking sites (SNSs) on the academic performance of students has increased in the last decade. This has been proliferated by the massive numbers of people who access these sites. At the close of 2017, an estimated 3.8 billion people were using the internet globally, and Facebook was the most famous social networking site (Statista, 2018). In Uganda, the total mobile phone subscribers and internet users in 2016 stood at 22,034,837 and 15,531,954 respectively (Uganda Communications Commission, 2016). Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp are some of the popular social media sites that are being used in Uganda (Kanyoro, 2016). Many students in higher education institutions in Uganda are actively using these SNSs and this is particularly true for students at Makerere University. However, the influence of these sites on students' learning outcomes is a subject that has largely remained unexplored in Uganda's case.

A number of studies have analyzed the relationship between SNSs and students' academic performance worldwide (e.g., Amin et al. 2016; Asare & Frimpong, 2016; Asiedu, 2016; Badri et al. 2017; Divya & Mitushi, 2016; Doleck & Lajoie, 2018; Dolecket al. 2017; Durai et al. 2016; Ekechukwu, 2017; Harath & Alobaidy, 2016; Kolan & Dzandza, 2018; Mouri & Ali-Arshad, 2016; Nsizwana et al. 2017; Nyabera, 2017; Samaha & Hawi, 2016; Sudha & Kavitha, 2016; Sukeerthi & Krupalini, 2018; Vicera, 2016). In contrast to this vast and growing literature, only one study has been conducted in Uganda (Jehopio et al. 2017). While some studies have found SNSs to positively influence students' academic performance (e.g., Amin et al. 2016), other studies have found a negative influence (e.g., Bragdon & Dowler, 2016; Gok, 2016; Zhang & Lee, 2016), while others have found both positive and negative influences on academic performance e.g., (Harath & Alobaidy, 2016).

In light of this, the available literature on the nexus between SNSs use and academic performance has largely remained inconclusive. Sharma and Visihvakarma (2016) reviewed the literature on the effect of SNSs and reported both negative as well as positive influences on students' academic performance. In a recent review of social networking and academic performance literature, Doleck and Lajoie (2018) concluded that the 23 papers reviewed offered mixed findings regarding the nexus between academic performance and social network use, serving as a call for further research. Whilst the primary aim of this study is not to resolve these uncertainties, it does try to bring clarity to this growing research area.

In Uganda, Jehopio *et al.*(2017) analyzed the effect of online SNSs usage on the academic performance of Makerere University students. The study explored the relationship of academic performance with time management skills, membership of multiple online SNSs and heavy usage of SNSs. However, the empirical methodology here differs from Jehopio *et al.*(2017) study in several ways. Firstly, Jehopio *et al.*(2017) used a binary variable with two possible outcomes (good or bad) performance as the dependent variable. This study has used students' CGPA to measure academic performance. Secondly, Jehopio *et al.*(2017) sample broadly included students offering arts and science majors. As a point of departure, the data used here is from a sample of Economics students. This sample has the advantage in that all students are doing the same subject. Thirdly, unlike Jehopio *et al.* (2017) who used the binary logit, this study has employed the multinomial logit to predict the influence of SNSs on academic performance. In sum, this study has explored the relationship of academic performance with students' attitude and use of SNSs in learning Economics, number of SNSs subscribed to, and frequency of SNSs usage during lectures. The relationship between these variables and students' CGPA sets the basis of this study and is taken up further in subsequent sections.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several research studies have investigated students' attitude towards the use of SNSs in learning and its influence on academic performance. However, the findings have been mixed. While some studies indicate that SNSs negatively influence academic performance (e.g., Samaha & Hawi, 2016; Sukeerthi & Krupalini, 2018; Morallo, 2014), other studies have instead found performance to improve (e.g., Divya & Mitushi, 2016; Durai et al. 2016; Ekechukwu, 2017; Al-rahmi et al. 2017). Ekechukwu (2017) investigated the effect of SNSs on students' academic performance in Nigeria and found that SNSs positively impacted academic performance. In a study of the impact of students' attitudes towards social media use in education, Divya and Mitushi (2017) found that management students in India held a positive opinion towards social media. Similarly, in Durai*et al.*(2016) study in India on the perspectives of pharmacy students and faculties on SNSs, the majority (72.73%) of respondents claimed that they had improved their academic performance because of SNSs. In contrast, a recent study in India found that Facebook impaired academic performance (Sukeerthi & Krupalini, 2018).

Regarding the number of SNSs subscribed to and academic performance, Leyrer-Jackson and Wilson(2017) studied the nexus between social media use and academic performance among Biology students.They investigated the link between use of SNSs on students self-reported Grade Point Average (GPA). The researchers found a negative association between the number of social-media websites subscribed to and the corresponding students' GPA in biological sciences. In the Philippines, Morallo's (2014) study on the effect of SNSs on academic performance found that GPA was inversely related to the number of SNSs.

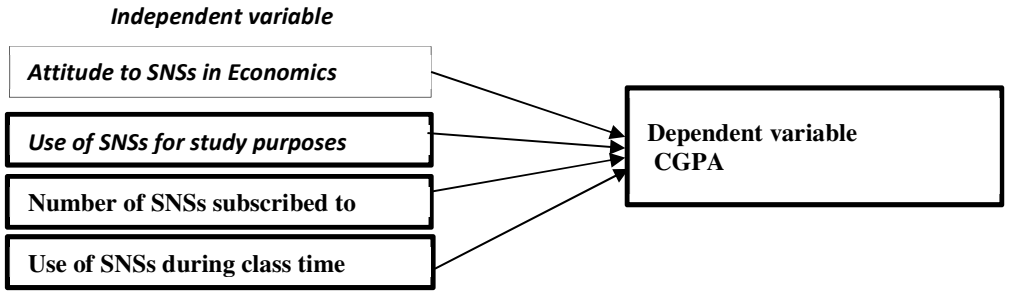
A substantial amount of literature has addressed the effect of SNSs use during the real-class time on students' academic performance. Again, the findings on the effect are mixed. While some studies report negative influences on grades (e.g., Demirbilek & Talan, 2017), other studies report positive experiences for students (e.g., Yu et al. 2010). Rozgonjuk *et al.*(2018) explored the relationship between problematic smartphone use and use of social media in lectures among Estonian university students and found that social media use in lectures explained the relationships between problematic smartphone use and poorer academic outcomes. Similarly, Demirbilek and Talan (2017) study among Turkish undergraduate students found that engaging in social media use while trying to follow instructions reduced learners' capacity for cognitive processing causing poor academic performance. In contrast, Yu *et al.*(2010) investigation of online social networking impacts among undergraduate students in China found that online social networking influenced their learning outcomes.

Some studies have examined the relationship between SNSs use and GPA. However, the findings are equally mixed. While some studies have shown that SNSs use positively influences academic performance (e.g., Asif-Ur-Rahman et al. 2015), other studies report a negative effect (e.g., Asare & Frimpong, 2016; Leyrer-Jackson & Wilson, 2017), while others have not found any relationship (e.g., Ekechukwu, 2017)]. Other studies have used various measures of academic performance apart from GPA. For instance, Jehopio*et al.* (2017) analyzed the effects of online SNSs use on academic performance among Makerere University students. They used a qualitative variable with two possible outcomes (good or bad) performance as the dependent variable and students' time management skills, membership of multiple online SNSs, and heavy use of online SNSs as the independent variables. Their findings showed that use of online SNSs improved students' academic performance.

In spite of the positive influences, other researchers view the interaction between SNSs and academic performance negatively. In a study among Kisii University students in Kenya, the majority (49.65%) of the respondents indicated that SNSs affected academic performance in the sense that they spent much time on the sites, accessed the sites during lectures hence distracting them from concentrating on academic matters (Nyabera, 2017). This finding resembles an earlier study among Kisii University students in Kenya, where most of the students felt that SNSs had more negative impacts on academic performance (Nyabera & Onyango, 2016).

Figure 1 presents the hypothesized influence of the explanatory variables. The framework shows that each of the predictor variables has a role in influencing the dependent variable. From previous studies, it is hypothesized that attitude towards SNSs in learning Economics, use of SNSs for study purposes and the number of SNSs subscribed to positively influences students' grades; while the use of SNSs during class time has a negative influence on students CGPA.

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SNSs AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE



3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study was to examine the relationship between social networking sites and Economics students' academic performance. The specific objectives were:

1. To analyze the influence of attitude to SNSs in Economics on students' academic performance.
2. To explore the extent to which the use of SNSs for study purposes affects students' academic performance.
3. To find out whether the number of SNSs subscribed to affects students' academic performance.
4. To explore the extent to which the use of SNSs during real class time affects students' academic performance.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The research employed a cross-sectional survey design. The population consisted of undergraduate Economics students at Makerere University. The study used multi-stage sampling technique. In the first instance, purposive sampling was used to select the five schools which have Economics students namely, the School of Education, the School of Economics, the School of Business, the School of Statistics and Planning, and the School of Distance and Lifelong Learning. In the second instance, 369 questionnaires were distributed to undergraduate Economics students using captive audience sampling. Out of 369 questionnaires, 357 were completely filled. However, 60 questionnaires for first-year students were dropped from the analysis for lack of data on the dependent variable since they were in their first semester. The present analysis is therefore based on 297 questionnaires for second and third-year students.

4.2 DATA SOURCES

The results are based on primary data collected between August and November 2017. Data was collected by use of a semi-structured questionnaire, with combined close and open-ended and combination questions. The questions were designed to capture data on various variables including students' socio-demographic characteristics, current CGPA, attitude to SNSs for learning Economics, number of SNSs subscribed to, utilization of SNSs in learning Economics and frequency of SNSs use during lectures. The study used a seven-point Likert-scale to explore students' attitude and actual use of SNSs for academic purposes. The total number of items in each of these two constructs were fifteen (15). For each of these two variables, an index was computed by taking the average score that ranged from 1.0-7.0 with higher scores signifying a more favorable attitude or higher level of utilization of SNSs. The dependent variable was students' self-reported CGPA for the previous semesters. The analysis follows Makerere University's classification of degrees, diplomas, and certificates, as shown in Table 1. The various classes are based on the cumulative grade point average.

TABLE 1: MAKERERE UNIVERSITY CLASSIFICATION OF DEGREES, DIPLOMAS, AND CERTIFICATES

CGPA	Class
2.00 - 2.79	Pass
2.80 - 3.59	Second Class - Lower Division
3.60 - 4.39	Second Class – Upper Division
4.40 - 5.00	First Class

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data were subjected to descriptive and inferential analyses. Since the outcome variable was qualitative taking on four grade categories: First Class, Second Class Upper, Second Class Lower and Pass, the analysis used a multinomial logit model in which the log odds of the nominal outcome variable (Grades) were modeled as a linear combination of the predictors. This model has the capacity to analyze options across more than two categories, which facilitates the determination of the likelihood of belonging to a particular classification of the grade. In the analysis, Pass was used as the baseline comparison group. The remaining three classifications of performance corresponded to the following equations:

$$\ln\left[\frac{p(grade = LowerDiv)}{p(grade = PassDiv)}\right] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots 1$$

$$\ln\left[\frac{p(grade = UpperDiv)}{p(grade = PassDiv)}\right] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots 2$$

$$\ln\left[\frac{p(grade = Firstclass)}{p(grade = PassDiv)}\right] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots 3$$

where β's were the regression coefficients.

The modeling was based on previous studies, which had delved into analyzing schooling outcomes. In this study, a Grade was explained as a function of attitude to SNSs in learning Economics (X_1), utilization of SNSs (X_2), number of SNSs a student subscribes to (X_3) and use of SNSs during class time (X_4). The model compares the probability of a student being in degree classification 1 to 3, while the probability of being in the lowest class (Pass) is the base category. All analyses were performed using the statistical program Stata (Version 13).

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Of the 297 respondents, 54.5% were male and 45.5% were female. The average age was 22(±2) years. Fifty-five percent (55%) of the respondents were in year two, 55.7% were residing within the University, 31.4% were staying with parents, while 12.8% were renting. In Table 2, the distribution of the respondents by the schools can be ascertained. The table shows that the modal category was from the School of Statistics and Planning (34.3%) followed by the School of Economics (24.2%) then the School of Business (19.5%) the School of Education (15.2%) and the School of Distance and Lifelong Learning (6.7%).

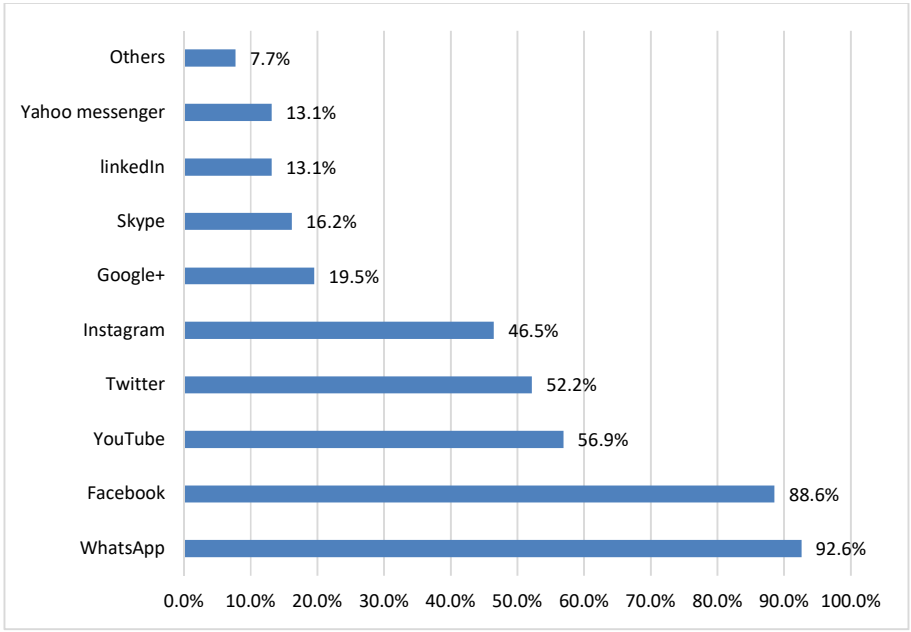
TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY SCHOOL

	Frequency	Percent
School of Economics	72	24.2
School of Business	58	19.5
School of Statistics and Planning	102	34.3
School of Education	45	15.2
School of Distance and Lifelong Learning	20	6.7
Total	297	100.0

Source: Analysis of survey data

Respondents were asked to indicate the SNSs they subscribed to. Figure 2 shows the number of students' profiles on the different SNSs. WhatsApp is the most popular followed by Facebook then YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram. Out of the 297 respondents, 92.6% have WhatsApp profiles while 88.6% have Facebook profiles. The findings are on par with a Ghanaian study, which also found that the majority (95.7%) of the respondents in the Presbyterian University College used WhatsApp (Asare & Frimpong, 2016).

FIGURE 2: SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES STUDENTS SUBSCRIBED TO



Source: Analysis of survey data

Data was collected on the number of SNSs subscribed to and the use of SNSs in learning Economics. Table 3 shows that the average number of SNSs a student subscribed to was about 5(4.5±2.0). For utilization of SNSs in learning Economics, the scores were obtained by averaging the fifteen items based on the seven-point Likert scale with scores closer to seven implying high intensity of using SNSs for academic purposes. Table 3 further shows that on average, the level of utilization of SNSs in learning Economics was about 5(4.6±2.0).

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF SNSs SUBSCRIBED TO AND UTILIZATION OF SNSs IN ECONOMICS

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Utilization of SNSs in learning Economics	4.6	1.0	1.7	7
Number of SNS subscribed to	4.5	2.0	1	10

Source: Analysis of survey data

The survey contained a series of questions pertaining to students' attitude and actual use of SNSs in learning Economics. In the questionnaire, fifteen items were formulated relating to attitude and actual use of SNSs for academic purposes. Mean and standard deviations were used based on a seven-point Likert scale rating with scores closer to seven signifying a more favorable response and vice versa. The questions to the two dimensions and their descriptive statistics are summarized in Table 4, which follows.

TABLE 4: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ATTITUDE AND USE OF SNSs IN ECONOMICS

	Attitude	Actual use
Accessing a vast quantity of materials related to the course outline	4.4±1.9	4.5±1.9
Discussing different topics with classmates	4.5±1.8	4.5±1.7
Discussing class assignment	4.7±1.6	4.5±1.8
Submitting assignment/research project to your lecturer	4.4±1.9	4.5±1.9
Watch videos related to a particular course unit	4.4±1.9	4.4±1.9
Interacting with other students on a particular topic and share ideas	4.8±1.8	4.8±1.7
Clarification of concepts/terminologies used by the lecturer	4.7±1.8	4.7±1.7
getting up to date information	5.4±1.6	5.2±1.6
Finding lecture-related information	4.9±1.7	4.9±1.7
Keeping in contact with other students in the class	5.1±1.6	5.2±1.6
A good place to contact my lecturer outside the class	3.8±2.0	3.9±2.0
To check lecture notes or assignments posted by the lecturer	4.9±1.8	4.8±1.8
Reading articles and take notes to prepare for the Economics lecture	4.3±1.9	4.3±1.9
Listening to audio files and take notes	4.1±2.0	4.1±2.1
A good place to access links to resources provided by the lecturer	5.0±1.7	4.8±1.9
Total	**4.6±1.0**	**4.6±1.0**

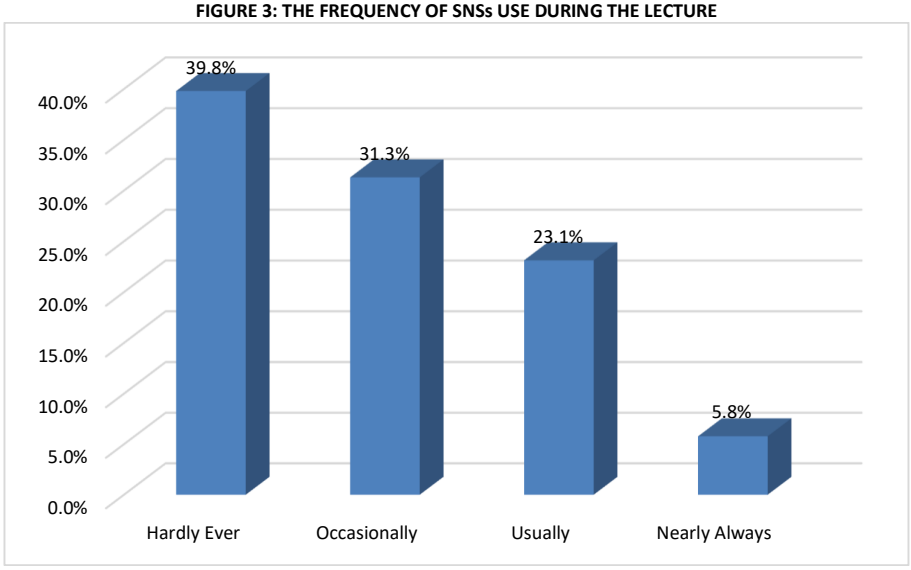
Source: Analysis of survey data

The table shows an overall average of 4.6 ±1.0 for each of the two independent variables. Since the two values were above 3.5, this means that most students attach great importance to SNSs for academic purposes. The areas in which more favorable attitude and utilization were reported included: getting up to date information; keeping in contact with other students in the class; accessing links to resources provided by the lecturer; finding lecture-related information; checking lecture notes or assignments posted by the lecturer; interacting with other students on a particular topic and sharing ideas; discussing class assignments; and clarification of concepts/terminologies used by the lecturer.

This study confirms those of earlier studies (e.g., Griffith & Liyanage, 2008; Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Yeo, 2014) which found SNSs to facilitate teaching and learning. In a recent study among Business Administration students in three private universities in Bangladesh, students reported that use of SNSs enhanced their knowledge, developed communication skills, provided the opportunity to share academic lessons and class schedules; which implied a positive academic performance (Mouri & Ali-Arshad, 2016). However, the findings differ from other scholars (e.g., Nyabera, 2017; Englander et al. 2010), who maintain that students use SNSs for other purposes other than academics, thus affecting their academic performance.

Use of SNSs during the lecture was also recorded, as shown in Figure 3. This variable was hypothesized to have a negative influence on grades. Respondents were asked to indicate whether at times they use SNSs to chat when the lecture is going on.

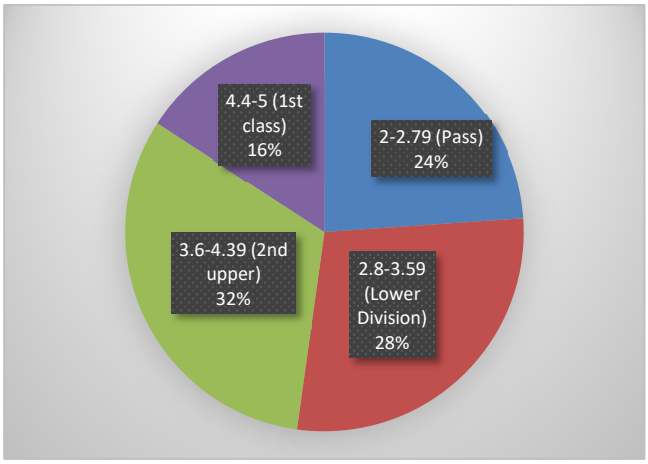
FIGURE 3: THE FREQUENCY OF SNSs USE DURING THE LECTURE



Source: Analysis of survey data

The majority (39.8%) hardly ever, 31.3% occasionally use SNSs, 23.1% usually use SNSs, while 5.8% always use SNSs while the lecture is going on. This finding concurred with a Nigerian study, which also found that the majority (76%) of students in tertiary institutions hardly ever visited their Facebook sites during classes (Asogwa et al. 2015).

FIGURE 4: CLASSIFICATION OF STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE BASED ON THEIR CGPA



Source: Analysis of survey data

The respondents provided data about their academic performance for the previous academic years. The dependent variable was the academic performance, which was measured using self-reported CGPA. As can be seen in Figure 4, most respondents (32%) reportedly obtained a CGPA of 3.60-4.39 classified as Second Class Upper Division. Students in Second Class Lower Division accounted for 28%, while those with a Pass and First Class Division constituted 24% and 16% respectively. The average CGPA score reported was 3.5±0.8 with a minimum being 2.00 while the maximum value reported was 5.00.

5.2 MULTINOMIAL LOGIT MODEL

A multinomial logit analysis was performed to test how well the factors such as attitude to SNSs use in learning Economics, number of SNSs subscribed to, utilization of SNSs in learning Economics and frequency of SNSs use during the lecture can predict academic performance. In the analysis, we distinguish among the three Grade categories, where students in the Pass classification are the baseline category. Table 5 presents the parameter estimates of the multinomial logit specification.

TABLE 5: MULTINOMIAL LOGISTIC REGRESSION PREDICTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SNSs AND THE CURRENT GRADES *(Base category was 2.0-2.79, Pass Division)*

	Variable/Category	2nd Lower division		2nd Upper		1st Class	
		Coef.	RRR	Coef.	RRR	Coef.	RRR
Attitude to SNSs in learning Economics	Attitude	0.61	**1.84****	1.01	**2.75***	1.96	**7.12***
No of SNSs subscribed to	No of SNSs	0.05	1.05	0.19	**1.21*****	0.27	**1.31****
Utilization of SNSs in learning Economics	Utilization	-0.03	0.97	0.88	**2.42****	1.24	**3.44***
Frequency of SNSs use during the lecture	**Base outcome=Hardly ever**						
	Occasionally	-0.37	0.69	-1.03	**0.36****	-1.20	**0.30****
	Usually	-0.30	0.74	-1.16	**0.31****	-1.78	**0.17****
	Nearly always	-2.54	**0.08****	-1.16	0.31	-0.56	0.57

Notes. *significant at 1%, **significant at 5%, ***significant at 10%

In Table 5, the column marked 'Coef' refers to the coefficients and shows either a positive or negative direction of the relationship, while the 'RRR' columns show the associated odd-ratios, that is, the likelihood of reporting a grade in a given classification with respect to the baseline (Pass). The dependent variable is academic performance measured as students' current grades, while student-specific variables such as attitude to SNSs in learning Economics, number of SNSs subscribed to, utilization of SNSs in learning Economics and frequency of use of SNSs during the lecture are the independent variables.

Results in Table 5 indicate that among Economics students in this study, a one-unit increase on the 7-point scale rating of attitude towards SNSs in learning Economics is significantly ($p < 0.05$) associated with a 1.84 likelihood of being in the Second Class Lower Division than being in the baseline category (Pass). In addition, a further improvement in attitude is followed by a significant likelihood ($p < 0.05$) of obtaining a Second Class Upper and First Class Division by 2.75 and 7.12 times respectively. These results suggest that compared to those in the baseline category, the log odds of achieving high academic performance levels increase as attitude to using SNSs for study purposes increase. These findings are consistent with expectations and are in accordance with other studies (e.g., Divya & Mitushi, 2016; Shohrowardhy & Hassan, 2014), which also reported a positive association between perception towards SNSs and academic performance using different measures. It, therefore, follows that students in the baseline category are significantly more likely to have a negative attitude to SNSs for study purposes than their counterparts in the other three categories.

Turning to the number of SNSs subscribed to and its effect on the four levels of academic performance, this variable is positive and significant at 10 and 5 percent in obtaining a Second Class Upper Division ($\beta = 0.19$, RRR = 1.21) and a First Class Division ($\beta = 0.27$, RRR = 1.31) respectively for an Economics student. Contrary to a priori expectations, the findings show that better grades are obtained with increased use of SNSs. These findings disagree with other studies (e.g., Leyrer-Jackson & Wilson, 2017), which reported a negative relationship between the number of social media websites to which students subscribe to and their GPA. One possible explanation is that at the bivariate level when the Pearson correlation analysis was run between CGPA and utilization of SNSs for academic purposes, the results revealed a rather weak ($R_{xy} = 0.12$) but statistically significant linear relationship between the two variables ($p = 0.046 < 0.05$). This infers that students with more SNSs subscription stand a better chance of having higher grades than those with few SNSs, especially if the sites are used constructively in searching, sharing and downloading materials related to Economics.

The above assertion was particularly rendered valid by the coefficients for the utilization of SNSs in learning Economics. Table 5 shows that apart from the non-significant negative (-0.03) effect of utilization of SNSs in obtaining a Second Class Lower Division, a 1-point increase in the level of utilization on a scale of 1-7 significantly increases the log odds of attaining a Second Class Upper and First Class Division by 2.42 and 3.44 times respectively. The implication of these findings is that fewer users of SNSs for academic purposes are 2.42 and 3.44 times more likely to report Pass Division relative to Second Class Upper and First Class Divisions respectively. *These findings* corroborate the results of other researchers (e.g., Torres-Diaz et al. 2016; Maqableh et al. 2015; Asif-Ur-Rahman et al. 2015). All these noted a positive effect of SNSs on students' academic achievement. Accordingly, this serves as an indicator of the significance of social network websites in enhancing students' academic achievements.

Regarding the frequency of SNSs use during the lecture, the results for all dummy coefficients take a negative value against academic performance, which implies an inverse relationship between good grades and high frequency of SNSs use during the lecture. For students who 'occasionally' use these media platforms, a significant ($p < 0.05$) effect is observed in relation to the probability of obtaining a Second Class Upper and First Class Division. According to RRR values, the findings suggest that the expected risk of having a Second Class Upper and First Class Division significantly reduced by 0.36 and 0.30 respectively for students who 'occasionally' use SNSs during the lecture as opposed to those who 'hardly ever'. Furthermore, the log odds of reporting Second Class Upper and First Class Divisions

decrease by 0.31 and 0.17 for students who 'usually' use SNSs platforms during the lecture compared to those who 'hardly ever' use these sites and this influence reached statistical significance at 0.05 level.

The analysis also indicates that for students who 'nearly always' use SNSs during lectures, the coefficients remain negative but statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) was in relation to reporting Second Class Lower Division but not other divisions. The RRR of 0.08 indicates that students who use SNSs 'nearly always' are 0.08 times less likely to report Second Class Lower Division compared to their counterparts who 'hardly ever' use SNSs when the lecture is going on. The findings provide partial support for using SNSs 'nearly always' and grades obtained. The findings by and large suggest that use of SNSs during the lecture is negatively associated with attaining better divisions (Second Class Lower Division, Second Class Upper, and First Class Division), but positively linked to reporting a CGPA ranging from 2.00-2.79 (Pass). The results are consistent with earlier studies, which found multitasking to lower GPA and negatively affect school work (e.g., Buruk, 2012; Junco, 2012; Junco & Cotton, 2011, 2012; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2016). Corroborating this evidence, Ellis et al. (2010) noted that students who participate in such website activities during the teaching and learning process fair less than their counterparts who hardly get interrupted by SNSs during the learning process.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In summary, the findings are supportive of the hypothesis in which attitude to the use of SNSs in learning Economics was predicted to positively influence students' CGPA. It was further noted that subscribing to a wide range of SNSs positively affects Economics students' CGPA and this was significant in obtaining a Second Class Upper Division and First Class Division. There was also consistent support for the third hypothesis where it was established that use of SNSs for learning Economics is important in predicting students' grades. Lastly, the frequency of SNSs use was inversely related to good grades among the sampled respondents. It was established that students who use SNSs during the lecture were less academically successful compared with those who hardly ever check on SNSs while the lecture is going on. On the basis of these findings, authorities in higher education institutions and Makerere University, in particular, should explore the pedagogical uses of SNSs and how to utilize them inteaching and learning to improve students' academic performance. It is imperative for Economics educators and faculty to guide students in the constructive use of SNSs to augment their learning. This would involve organizing seminars and workshops geared at training students in the use of SNSs in academia.

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