

A survey on Facebook and Academic Performance in Nigeria Universities.

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Abstract

This paper test students' facebook usage and their academic performance. The paper was also intended to find how pervasive the use of facebook by University students plays a role in their academic success. A 20 question questionnaire was designed and sent out to approximately 150 students of different Universities in Nigeria. To capture the main types of University, a Federal University, a State University and a Private University cut across the nation were chosen. Of the questionnaire sent out, 81% of them were within the age of 18 to 21. The Independent variables measured how actively students used facebook, including how much time they spend on facebook, how often they update their status, post on friends' walls, comment on others' pages, the level of their privacy settings, and how many friends and photo albums they have. In order to accurately measure students' academic achievement, we had student's self-report their in-class participation, attendance, as well as grade point average. Six pre-determined hypotheses were tested. First, the more time a student spends on facebook, the lower grade point average the student has. Secondly, the higher a student's privacy settings are on facebook, the higher that student's grade point average is. Thirdly, the more a student updates his or her facebook status, the less likely they are to have good class attendance. Fourthly, the more time a student spends on facebook, the less likely they are to participate in class. Fifthly, the more friends a student has on facebook, the more time he spends on facebook. Lastly, that the more posts a student puts on facebook, the less likely they are to participate in class. Data collected were analyzed and tested by using correlation tests through SPSS, a data analysis program. All the hypotheses were proven wrong.

Introduction

Social media networking has taken over the world. Facebook is at the forefront of the social media craze, with over 500 million active users on its website every month. University students are one of the primary demographics using facebook, with features such as photos, wall posts, and status updates becoming seemingly irresistible to those who want to connect with their friends.

The University culture loves facebook, embraces it and has turned the site into a lifestyle, rather than just a hobby or a fun pastime. Academic success is paramount issues to any student, with the pressure to belong to social networks. Are they really meeting up with the pressure to succeed academically? In this paper, an attempt will be made to take a look at these two major forces in a university student's life in Nigeria and see if we could find a relationship between the two.

Literature Review

In 2009 a draft manuscript suggested that facebook use might be related to lower academic achievement in college and graduate school (Karpinski, 2009). The report quickly became a media sensation and was picked up by hundreds of news outlets in a matter of days. However, the results were based on correlational data in a draft manuscript that had not been published, or even considered for publication.

Researchers examining facebook use from a media effects tradition have focused either on the social implications of the medium or on the potential risks that users of social networking sites may experience. For instance, a variety of studies have noted that the use of facebook is positively related to social capital (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Valenzuela, *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand, some research suggests that facebook users underestimate the potential privacy risks of sharing information on the site (Acquisti and Gross, 2006; Dwyer, *et al.*, 2007).

As with claims of dangers from older media, a recent study (and corresponding press release) indicating that facebook use and collegiate grade point averages (GPA) were negatively correlated generated a great deal of media hype (Karpinski, 2009).

As Karpinski (2009) herself notes, she is not the first to examine the relationship between facebook use and grade point averages. She references two studies that lead to the hypothesis that academic performance and use of the site might be negatively correlated. First, she cites a Master's thesis by Boogart (2006). While the thesis offers some suggestive evidence, Boogart only examined the

relationship between time spent on facebook and GPA, and similarly failed to utilize control variables despite a diverse collection of students from four universities. The second study by Karpinski cited by Kubey, Lavin, and Barrows (2001) does not mention social networking sites at all. She claims the suggestion in the draft FG paper that social networking sites represent a type of exclusively recreational use actually runs counter to other literature in the field. It should be noted that an additional paper by Kolek and Saunders (2008) found that there was no correlation between facebook use and GPA in a representative sample of students from a public Northeast research university. The draft FG manuscript cited the Kolek and Saunders piece, but did not note its findings regarding the lack of a relationship between facebook use and Grades.

Defining social Networks

Facebook, MySpace, Orkut, Cyworld, Bebo and other social network sites are, perhaps, the best examples of O'Reilly's (2005) Web 2.0 environment, where audiences have become co-authors on interactive websites.⁵ In a similar fashion as blogs, SNS allow individuals to present themselves to other users using a variety of formats, including text and video. Just like chat services. Social-networking sites and facebook_Socializing via the Internet has become an increasingly important part of young adult life (Gemmill & Peterson, 2006). Relative to the general population, adolescents and young adults are the heaviest computer and Internet users, primarily using it for completing school assignments (46%), e-mail and/or instant messaging (36%), and playing computer games (38%; DeBell & Chapman, 2006). Social-networking sites (hereafter SNS) are the latest online communication tool that allows users to create a public or private profile to interact with people in their networks (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). SNS incorporate a list of other users with whom individuals share a connection. But unlike any other web service, SNS allow individuals to make visible their list of connections to others and to traverse their social networks (boyd & Ellison, 2007). Hence, more than virtual Lessons from facebook 5 communities born online, SNS are usually online communities created and maintained to reflect offline relationships.

SNS can be defined as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). One such website is facebook_, which was created by Mark Zuckerberg to help residential college and university

students identify students in other residence halls. It is described as “. . . an online directory that connects people through social networks at colleges and universities” (Zuckerberg, 2005, p. 1). Websites such as MySpace_ and the more popular FB have millions of registered users, with FB becoming the overwhelmingly more popular SNS (comScore, 2009; Gonzalez, 2009, checkfacebook.com).

An Overview of Facebook

Facebook was created in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes as a site for Harvard students only. Shortly after, it expanded to any college student with a .edu e-mail account. Between Fall 2005 and Fall 2006, facebook expanded to high school networks, first, work networks, later, and, eventually, to Internet users in general. According to comScore Inc.'s rankings of top websites, in 2008 facebook.com was ranked as the Lessons from Facebook 6 16th most visited website on the Internet in the U.S. (comScore, 2008a), with 34 million unique visitors by January 2008, and as the 13th most popular website worldwide (comScore, 2008b), with 98 million unique visitors by December 2007. As of March 2008, Facebook reported having 67 million active users (those who have returned to the site in the last 30 days), with more than half of them returning daily and spending an average of 20 minutes per day on the site (Facebook, 2008).

Like most social network sites, facebook provides a formatted web page into which each user can enter personal information, including gender, birthday, hometown, political and religious views, e-mail and physical addresses, relationship status, activities, interests, favorite music and movies, educational background and a main personal picture. After completing their profile, users are prompted to identify others with whom they have a relationship, either by searching for registered users of facebook or by requesting their contacts to join facebook (usually by e-mail). Once someone is accepted as a “friend,” not only the two users' personal profile but also their entire social networks are disclosed to each other. This allows each user to traverse networks by clicking through “friends” profiles, so that one's social network snowballs rapidly across people and institutions (Walther et al., 2008). This capability is the backbone of facebook and other SNS and what attracts millions of users around the globe.

Facebook profiles also include two types of messaging services. A private system, which is very similar to a webmail service, and a public system called “The Wall,” where “friends” leave comments to the owner of the profile that can be viewed by other users. Usually, “The Wall” contains short messages that reflect sentiments, common activities between “friends,” or call attention to external websites or events. Lessons from Facebook 7. To

keep users updated about their social circles, facebook has two features: "News Feed", which appears on the homepage of each user, and "Mini-Feed", which appears in each individual's profile. "News Feed" updates a personalized list of news stories throughout the day generated by the activity of "friends". Thus, each time users log in, they get the latest headlines in their social networks. "Mini-Feed" is similar, except that it centers around one individual. Each person's "Mini-Feed" shows what has changed recently in their profile and what content or modules ("applications") they have added. Because individuals can delete from their own "Mini-Feed" stories they do not like, users retain control of who gets to read or see what about them.

Among the most popular modules users can incorporate to their profiles is "facebook Groups," which allows users to create and join groups based around common interests and activities. The "Groups" application displays each individual's groups as well as groups their "friends" have joined recently. Thus, an important share of the civic and political impact of facebook should occur within groups developed by users and organizations.

Information Gathering.

Of the various information gathering techniques the questionnaire technique was used. This was because of the nature of information required and the form of analysis to be conducted. A 20 question questionnaire was designed and administered to students from three different Universities across Nigeria - The University of Ilorin, a federal University, the Nasarawa State University, a State owned University and the Bingham University, a private University. The students were asked to answer the questionnaire anonymously so that they could present truthful information. Of the 150 questionnaire administered, 132 were returned. One hundred and twenty two (122) were facebook users.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis one`

The more time a student spends on facebook, the "lower his grade Point Average" will be

This hypothesis examines the overall effect of facebook use on what most people would consider a prime factor of student academic performance: his or her grade point average. We feel that there is an inverse relationship between these two factors, as the more time spent on facebook, the less time a student has to attend to academic matters, such as homework, studying for tests.

For our data measurement, time on facebook will be measured as how often one spends time actively using facebook, and grade point average will be

recorded as the student's current, cumulative achieved grade point average, as measured on a 5.0s scale.

Hypothesis two

The higher a student's grade point average, the "higher the student's facebook privacy settings" will be.

Our second hypothesis takes a look at the relationship between a student's grade point average and the overall level of facebook privacy settings on a student's profile. We feel that there is a direct relationship between these two variables that as a student's grade point average increases, the level of his or her facebook profile privacy settings increases. We believe this under the justification that those who have higher grade point averages are cautious of the work they do and how it is perceived, so they would be more concerned about their own personal image and how they are perceived. In turn, they will take caution to prevent many people from being able to see their profile and judge them. Grade point average will be recorded as the student's current, cumulative achieved grade point average, as measured on a 5.0 scale, and facebook privacy settings will be the overall amount of security on one's profile, depending on who is able to see their information.

Hypothesis three

The more a student updates their facebook "status, the less likely they are to have good "class attendance.

This hypothesis will examine the correlation between how often a student updates their facebook status and their class attendance. We believe this to be an inverse relationship; that the more times a student updates their status, the less likely they will be to go to class. If students are spending a significant amount of time using facebook and constantly updating their status, they will have less time to go to class. Students can update their statuses so often that they become distracted from their schoolwork and become interested in other things. Since their status occupies so much of their attention, they may not place as much importance on being in class. For this hypothesis, updating a status will be defined as changing the information shown as one's "status" (the words next to one's profile name) on facebook, and class attendance will be measured as being present in class during the designated class time.

Hypothesis four

The more time a student spends on facebook, the "less likely they are to participate in class.

This hypothesis will examine the correlation between the amount of time spent on facebook and the amount which a student participates in class. We

believe that this is an inverse relationship; the more time a student spends on facebook, the less likely the person participates in class. If students bring their laptops to class, they may get bored of the lesson and find their way onto facebook.

This will detract their attention to what is going on in class, so they may not be able to fully understand what is going on, hindering participation and drawing them even further into facebook since they do not understand what is going on in the first place. Outside of the classroom, people may spend more time on facebook and less time preparing for class, so they do not feel confident to participate in class. For this hypothesis, time spent on facebook will be measured as how often one spends time actively using facebook. Participation will be measured as the level of engagement in class material and class activities, including paying attention, texting, using a laptop for class related activity, and contributing to class discussion.

Hypothesis five

The more friends a student has on facebook, the "the more time he spends on facebook"

This hypothesis will examine the correlation between the amount of friends a student has on facebook, and their time spent on facebook. We believe this to be a direct relationship; that the more friends one has on facebook, the more likely they are to spend more time socializing with their friends on facebook. A person who has a lot of friends on facebook is most likely going to be responding to more people and thus spending more time. For this hypothesis, the amount of friends will be measured as those people who are identified as a "friend" on a student's facebook profile. Time spent will be measured as often they spend time on facebook.

Hypothesis six

The more posts a student puts on facebook, the "less likely they are to participate in class.

This hypothesis will examine the correlation between how often student posts information on their facebook page and their class participation. We believe this to be an inverse relationship; that the more times a student posts information, the less likely they will be to participate in their classes. If students are spending time posting a lot of information to facebook, they will be less inclined to participate in class because they will be dedicating their time to facebook instead.

Students can become distracted by using facebook during and outside of class and may become more interested in that than the material. Since their facebook posts occupy so much of their attention, they may not place as much importance on paying attention and participating in class. For this hypothesis, facebook posts will be considered information a student posts on his/her facebook

profile, including sharing status updates for all to see on facebook, writing comments, sharing a link, video, or photo, or posting any other type of information. Participation will be the engagement in class material and the act of sharing in the activities of the group, including paying attention, texting, using a laptop for class related activity, and contributing to class discussion.

Operational Definition

Hypothesis one

The more time a student spends on facebook, the lower his or her grade point average will be.

Dependent Variable:

Variable: How often do you spend time on facebook?

(Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)

Independent Variable:

What is your grade point average on a 4.0 scale?

(0-0.5, 0.51-1.0, 1.01-1.5, 1.51-2.0, 2.01-2.5, 2.51-3.0, 3.01-3.5, 3.51-4.0)

Type of test statistic:

We will be using a correlation test since both of the variables are interval/ratio.

Hypothesis two

The higher a student's grade point average, the higher the student's facebook privacy settings will be.

Dependent Variable:

What is your overall facebook privacy setting?

(Everyone, Friends of Friends, Friends, Yourself, Customize)

Independent Variable:

What is your grade point average on a 4.0 scale?

(0-0.5, 0.51-1.0, 1.01-1.5, 1.51-2.0, 2.01-2.5, 2.51-3.0, 3.01-3.5, 3.51-4.0)

Type of test statistic:

We will be using a correlation test since both of the Variables are interval/ratio.

Hypothesis three

The more a student updates their facebook status, the less likely they are to have good class attendance.

Independent Variable:

How often do you generally update your facebook status?

(Never or almost never, once every few months, once a month, once every few weeks, once a week, two or more times a week, once a day, two or more

times a day, every hour, two or more times an hour)

Dependent Variable:

How often do you miss class?

(never, rarely, sometimes, often, always)

Type of test statistic:

We will be using a correlation test since both of the variables are interval/ratio.

Hypothesis four

The more time a student spends on facebook, the "less likely they are to participate in class.

Independent Variable:

How often do you spend time on facebook?

(Never, rarely, sometimes, often, always)

Dependent Variable:

In general, how actively do you participate in class?

(not actively at all, a little actively, neither actively nor inactively, somewhat actively, very actively)

Do you text during class?

(never, rarely, sometimes, often, always)

Do you use a laptop for activities unrelated to class during class?

(never, rarely, sometimes, often, always)

Do you contribute to class discussion?

(never, rarely, sometimes, often, always)

Type of test statistic:

We will be using a correlation test since both of the variables are interval/ratio.

Hypothesis five

The more friends a student has on facebook, the "the more time he spends on facebook"

Independent Variable:

How many friends do you have on facebook?

(0- 100, 101- 200, 201- 300, 301- 400, 401- 500, 501- 600, 601- 700, 701- 800, 801- 900, 901- 1000, 1000+)

Dependent Variable:

How motivated are you to be successful in class?

(Not at all motivated, A little motivated, Neither motivated nor unmotivated, Somewhat motivated, Very motivated)

Type of test statistic:

We will be using a correlation test since both of the variables are interval/ratio.

Hypothesis six

The more posts a student puts on facebook, the less likely they are to participate in class.

Independent Variable:

How often do you post on other people's facebook Pages?

(wall posting, sharing links, photos, or videos)?

How often do you comment on others' face book postings?

(Never or almost never, once every few months, once a month, once every few weeks, once a week, two or more times a week, once a day, two or more times a day, every hour, two or more times an hour)

Dependent Variable:

In general, how actively do you participate in class?

(not actively at all, a little actively, neither actively nor inactively, somewhat actively, very actively)

Do you text during class?

(never, rarely, sometimes, often, always)

Do you use a laptop for activities unrelated to class during class?

(never, rarely, sometimes, often, always)

Do you contribute to class discussion?

(never, rarely, sometimes, often, always)

Type of test statistic:

We will be using a correlation test since both of the variables are interval/ratio

Results

At the end of the study period, 122 facebook users completed the survey. Of those 55, or 44.1% were females, and 67, or 54.9% were males. The majority of the respondents attended Private University (43%) while 25% and 32% attended State University and Federal University respectively.

Of the respondents, the majorities, 65.5%, were 22 and above Years old, while 11.5% were 21, 10.7% were 20, 9.8% were 19, and 2.5%. In addition 92% of the respondents said that they use facebook.

All of the data was put into the SPSS data Analyzing program, and used to test each of the various hypotheses.

Hypothesis one

The more time a student spends on facebook, the lower his or her grade point average will be

The first hypothesis is that students who spend more time on facebook are more likely to have a lower grade point average. This was tested this theory using correlation,

and the data obtained indicates that there is a weak correlation of 0.33 as shown Table1 . This means that there is no significance difference between the two variables; This hypothesis was then rejected. The more time a student spends on facebook, the lower his or her grade point average will be. It was found to be not true because with the increasing amount of responsibilities and activities

student do during the academic year, students are becoming better at timing their time.

		What is your GPA (on a 5.0 scale)?	How often do you spend time on facebook?
What is your GPA (on a 5.0 scale)?	Pearson Correlation	1	.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.717
	N	122	122
How often do you spend time on facebook?	Pearson Correlation	.033	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.717	
	N	122	122

Table 1: The Correlation analysis table of hypothesis one.

Hypothesis two

The higher a student's grade point average, the "higher the student's facebook privacy settings" will be.

The hypothesis that those students who have higher grade point average are more likely to have higher levels of privacy settings was tested using correlation. As seen in the Table 2, no significance relation was found between the variables grade point average and privacy settings. Since we have a negative correlation (-0.17), we then reject the hypothesis that state that, the higher a student's grade point average, the "higher the student's facebook privacy settings" will be.

Correlations			
		What is your GPA (on a 5.0 scale)?	What is your overall facebook privacy settings?
What is your GPA (on a 5.0 scale)?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.017
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.856
	N	122	122
What is your overall facebook privacy settings?	Pearson Correlation	-.017	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.856	
	N	122	122

Table 2: The Correlation analysis of the hypothesis two.

Hypothesis three

The more a student updates their facebook "status, the less likely they are to have good "class attendance.

The hypothesis that those students who update their facebook statuses more often are less likely to have good class attendance was tested using correlation. As seen in Table 3, no significant relationship was found between status updates and class attendance. Since there is a weak correlation at significance level of 0.181, Therefore the hypothesis which state that the more posts a student puts on facebook, the less likely they are to participate in class was rejected.

Correlations			
		How often do you update your facebook status?	How often do you miss class?
How often do you update your facebook status?	Pearson Correlation	1	.181(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.045
	N	122	122
How often do you miss class?	Pearson Correlation	.181(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	
	N	122	122

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: The Correlation analysis of the hypothesis three.

Hypothesis four

The more time a student spends on facebook, the "less likely they are to participate in class". The hypothesis that the more time a student spends using facebook, the likely they are to participate in class was tested using correlation. The results show that there was no significance correlation between the two variables. It was believed that this is because students are good in paying attention to different task simultaneously. They may be on facebook during class, but they are still able to pay attention and participate. Students are used to constantly being connected to social media that they aren't completely distracted by it anymore. Since there was a negative correlation (- 0.001), the hypothesis was rejected.

Correlations			
		In general, how actively do you participate in class?	How often do you spend time on facebook?
In general, how actively do you participate in class?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.988
	N	122	122
How often do you spend time on facebook?	Pearson Correlation	-.001	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.988	
	N	122	122

Table 4: The correlation analysis table of hypothesis four.

Hypothesis five

The more friends a student has on facebook, the ".the more time he spends on facebook". The hypothesis that the more friends a student has on facebook, the more time they spend on facebook was tested using correlation. There was no significance between the variables number of friends and the amount of time as shown in the table below. Since this was a weak correlation (0.243) the hypothesis which states that The more friends a student has on facebook, the ".the more time he spends on facebook" was rejected.

Correlations			
		How many friends do you have on facebook?	How often do you spend time on facebook?
How many friends do you have on facebook?	Pearson Correlation	1	.243(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
	N	122	122
How often do you spend time on facebook?	Pearson Correlation	.243(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
	N	122	122

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

Table 5: The correlation analysis for hypothesis five.

Hypothesis six

The more posts a student puts on facebook, the "less likely they are to participate in class. The sixth hypothesis showed that students who put more posts on facebook are less likely to participate in class was tested using correlation. Postings were measured in terms of putting wall posts, sharing links, photos, or videos on other people's walls and commenting on others' facebook postings. Class participation was measured in terms of general active participation, texting during class, using a laptop for activities unrelated to class during class, and the contribution to class

discussion. As seen in the data, it was found that a significant correlational relationship between how often a student posts information on other people's facebook pages and the rate they text during class time. Since we have weak correlation (0.078, -0.037, -0.051 and 0.419) was weak, the hypothesis which states that the more posts a student puts on facebook, the less likely they are to participate in class was similarly rejected.

Correlations						
		In general, how actively do you participate in class?	How often do you post on other people's facebook pages?	How often do you text during class?	How often do you use your laptop for activities	How often do you contribute to class discussion?
In general, how actively do you participate in class?	Pearson Correlation	1	.078	-.037	-.051	.419(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.392	.689	.576	.000
	N	122	122	122	122	122
How often do you post on other people's facebook	Pearson Correlation	.078	1	.224(*)	.144	.072
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.392		.013	.112	.430
	N	122	122	122	122	122
How often do you text during class?	Pearson Correlation	-.037	.224(*)	1	.286(**)	.071
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.689	.013		.001	.438
	N	122	122	122	122	122
How often do you use your laptop for activities unrelated to class during class time?	Pearson Correlation	-.051	.144	.286(**)	1	-.130
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.576	.112	.001		.153
	N	122	122	122	122	122
How often do you contribute to class discussion?	Pearson Correlation	.419(**)	.072	.071	-.130	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.430	.438	.153	
	N	122	122	122	122	122

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table six: The correlation analysis for hypothesis six

Discussion

At the end of the survey, the data collected was analysed using SPSS program to run correlation and T-tests in search of finding relationships between two two variables.

The study expected to find relationships and results for six different hypotheses.

First, the more time a student spends on facebook, the lower grade point average the student has. Second, the higher a student's privacy settings are on facebook, the higher that student's grade point average is. Third, the more a student updates his/her facebook status, the less likely they are to have good class attendance. Fourth, the more time a student spends

on facebook, the less likely they are to participate in class. Fifth, the more friends a student has on facebook, the more motivated they are to succeed in their classes, and lastly, that the more wall posts a student puts on facebook, the less likely they are to participate in class.

The study revealed that all of the hypotheses were proven wrong. The first hypothesis was proven to be incorrect, that there was no significance correlation between the amount of time a student spends on facebook and his or her grade point average. The fifth hypothesis was proven wrong, because there was not enough significance correlation between how many times a person updates their status and how often he or she misses class.

However, there was no significance correlation found between how often a student updates their status and class discussion; the more often a student updates their status, the more actively he or she participates in class discussion. significance between the amount of time one spends on facebook and their participation in class. The fifth hypothesis was also proven incorrect as there was not enough significance between the number of friends on facebook and the level of motivation a student has. The sixth hypothesis, the more posts a student updates on facebook, the less likely they are to participate in class, was proven incorrect. There was no significance between the number of postings on facebook and the use of a laptop and texting in class.

Conclusion

Overall, all of hypotheses did not show enough significance to be proven correct. Without an iota of ambiguity it can be deduced that the use of facebook does not have an adverse effect on the academic performance of students in the Nigerian Universities.

Future Research

Further research could ask students why they use facebook and what draws them back to facebook most importantly the use of Blackberry smartphones to have access to their facebook account, tweeter and Blackberry chart. It would also be interesting to ask open ended questions regarding how laptop and Blackberry smartphones use influences their behaviors or participation in class.

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