

The Effect of Social Media Usage on Employee Performance at the Gambia Ports Authority

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Abstract

Research aim: The study aims to determine the effect of social media usage during work hours on employee work performance in the Gambia Ports Authority. Specifically, determine how often employees use social media during work hours, assess the effect of social media use on employee performance in GPA and identify the challenges social media usage by employees during work hours affect GPA.

Design/Method/Approach: The study used a quantitative-survey research strategy getting information from individuals within GPA. Analysis of the data was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) analytical and SmartPLS tool.

Research Finding: The hypothesis is supported which in turn indicates the path is significant between the independent and dependent variable. H1 (0.547, $p < 0.05$) describes the path between social media usage and employee performance.

Theoretical contribution/Originality: The study revealed the necessity for GPA to adopt social media as a strategic communication tool for efficient dissemination of information within the organization and a means to empower employees. Theoretically, informed employees are more involved and engaged to serve the organisation.

Practical/Policy implication: The study will aid the implementation of a social media policy which will serve as a policy document to guide staff on how and when to use social media during official work hours.

Research limitation: The findings of the study cannot be generalized with other SOEs as the study is limited to Gambia Ports Authority only.

Keywords: Social Media, Gambia Ports Authority, Employee Performance.

1. Introduction

Due to the time spent on issues that are not relevant to work, the arrival of the Internet and smartphones has produced and raised concerns in the relationship between social media usage and employee performance at Gambia Ports Authority. The demand to increase efficiency and the requirement to examine the effectiveness of governmental institutions are both impacted by this issue. This brought about the system of performance management such as performance contracts which is now being adopted and implemented in GPA and other public sector institutions. This introduces the use of cost benefit analysis and management by objectives in the Organization.

In GPA, time spent using internet activities such as browsing social media which is a significant hidden cost to the Authority. This, however, affects employee performance as social media could be utilized for more beneficial purposes such as knowledge sharing, a communication platform within staff or as a marketing and branding tool.

As in previous studies, the use of social networking sites at work is increasing. There is a school of thought that contends social media decreases performance of workers due to waste of time, data disclosure from employees conversing openly, malware used by online criminals, and potential open access to company servers provided by slack password policies (Weru, 2015). By taking a more comprehensive approach to researching the effects of social media networks on performance of workers within the context of a multinational manufacturing company operating in Kenya, the study aimed to close the knowledge gap.

Furthermore, a study by Lee and Lee (2020) on Social Media Use and Job Performance in the Workplace sought to close the gap by examining South Korean office workers' social media use and how it affects their individual job performance. The study investigates the task interdependence and task equivocality's moderating effects on such effects and the effects of impact of utilizing KakaoTalk and Facebook in the office on each employee's ability to accomplish their job.

Additionally, a study by Zwingini (2018), discovered that Facebook considerably enhances employee performance in terms of commitment in SMEs in North Central Nigeria, although YouTube and Twitter are insignificant in doing so. According to the study, there is no correlation between employee social media usage and performance among SMEs in North Central Nigeria.

Based on another study on the Influence of Facebook usage on employee productivity by Adzovie (2017). The study revealed that office workers spend more time on social media platforms like Facebook, doing activities unrelated to their jobs, such as creating personal networks, keeping tabs on friends and family, monitoring sports scores, streaming and downloading music, following social bookmarks, chatting with friends, reading and commenting on other people's status updates, browsing other people's photo galleries, and looking for friends. As a result, there is an uncomfortable air of ambiguity.

Another study by Simbarashe (2018), cautioned human resource managers to be aware of the challenges and opportunities related to social media's impact on employee performance. A case involving Mutare City Council demonstrated how pervasive social media has become in people's lives to the point where personnel use it while on the job. Employers now use social media to boost employee performance. Otherwise, they risk losing valuable production time. Social networking may be harmful to the company because it is addictive in nature, reduces employees' attention spans, and allows for the improper dissemination of information.

1.1. Statement of Problem

Due to the time spent on things that are not relevant to work, the arrival of the Internet and smartphones has produced and raised concerns in the relationship between social media usage and employee performance of GPA. Indeed, the advent of smartphones has exacerbated the issue, and as a result, they are now a distraction at work because they make it simple for employees to access social media. Since social media began to be used in GPA it has brought a lot of change in the organization. It is used informally as a communication tool. Employees are seen as assets in the GPA and are expected to play a great role in making the organization grow in the dynamic

changing business environment. Over time, social media has invaded the privacy of employees and spread to the workplace. (Sakyi, 2020). In GPA, time spent using internet activities such as surfing social media is a significant hidden expense to the Authority. This however affects employee performance as social media could be utilized for more beneficial purposes such as knowledge sharing, as a communication platform within staff or as a marketing and branding tool. Previously, GPA had an intranet facility in place which was used for information sharing within the Authority. This facility is no longer available due to the introduction of the internet which includes social media. However, social media is currently very beneficial to the Authority. Generally, every employee at GPA from the top person to the lowest ranked employee uses social media at a point in their work or non-work-related activities. Frequency and aggressive usage are not guided by any policy document to deter abuse and non-functional use.

1.2. Research Objectives

The study aimed to determine the effect of social media on employee work performance at the GPA but specifically to:

- a. Determine how often employees use social media during work hours.
- b. Assess the effect of social media use on employee performance in GPA.
- c. Identify the challenges of social media use by employees during work hours at the GPA.

2. Method

The study used a quantitative research strategy because it essentially focuses on getting information from individuals in a population setting that is familiar to them. Additionally, a descriptive research approach was applied to answer the study questions in a very systematic and precise manner (Munene & Nyaribo, 2013). The design seeks to depict a specific phenomenon in terms of its present trends, events, and connections between various components (Chitale, 2013). This study is conducted at the Gambia Ports Authority (GPA) which is in Liberation Avenue in Banjul. The population of the study is 387 employees. The population is basically a combination of various categories of all tenure staff members whose functions fully or partially domiciled in the office and have internet access on their computers at the Gambia Ports Authority. The choice of the population is driven by the need to be well informed of the relevant information pertaining to the effect of social media use on employee performance in the GPA. The study used simple stratified sampling technique relying on employee roll from GPA's HR department as sample framework. The adopted the Taro Yamane statistical formula which determine sample which stood at 196 respondents to represent the views of GPA and to determine how changes in employee performance brought on by the usage of social media (Bryman & Bell 2015). The Gambia Ports Authority would be able to distinguish between respondents from different departments using the correlational research design. This gives the study the chance to use factors from various departments within the organization to categorize social media usage inside the organization. Finally, it is believed that a descriptive study design, as demonstrated by Consuelo (2010), is appropriate for gathering data and reporting the state of the situation without changing any variables. The study used a structured, closed-ended questionnaire to collect data.

3. Results and Discussion

A total of 196 questionnaires were distributed and 162 usable questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 82%. The results of the demographics data revealed that almost every employee in GPA uses social media for various purposes although majority of the users are aged 31 to 40 years old and are mostly male. This suggest that GPA is a densely populated with male employees as it is an operational industry. The study further revealed that most of the men use social media during office hours. It is also noted that significant users of social media in GPA are staff with diploma or HND as indicated in Table 1 below. The reason for the frequent use of social media by this category of staff could be attributed to their level of literacy and exposure academically. Accordingly, a handful of employees have a minimum number of years working GPA, this indicates a lack of experience on the job thereby leading to idle time creating the urge to visit social networking sites. As per the study, the most common users of social media are the general staff, this could be due to their level of responsibility in the Authority. The senior-level managers that use social media, which can be interpreted as the high-level rank, are mostly busy with strategic functions and are mostly occupied with work and have not enough time to use social media during work.

In conclusion, the GPA could implement a social media policy which will serve as a policy document to guide staff on how and when to use social media during official work hours. It can also guide on the benefits of using social media and how it can help to enhance efficiency and productivity.

Table 1: Demographics of staff

Demographics of Respondents		Frequency	Percentage %
Sex of the respondent	Male	107	66.0%
	Female	55	34.0%
	Total	162	
Age of the respondent	21-30	42	25.9%
	31-40	63	38.9%
	41-50	42	25.9%
	51-60	15	9.3%
	Total	162	
Education of the respondent	Diploma/HND	85	52.5%
	First Degree	34	21.0%
	Master's Degree	34	21.0%
	PHD/ Doctorate	0	0.0%
	Other Professional Qualification	9	5.6%
	Total	162	
Years of work	1-5 years	54	33.3%
	6-10 years	47	29.0%
	11-16years	32	19.8%
	Above 16years	29	17.9%
Job Status	General Level Staff	91	56.2%

Demographics of Respondents			Frequency	Percentage %
	Middle Level Manager		48	29.6%
	Senior Level Manager		23	14.2%
	Total		162	

Source: Field Survey, SPSS (2024)

As per the Table 1 above, 107 counts of the respondents are male which represents 66% and 55 counts are female which entails 34% of the total 162 respondents. It can be concluded that an overwhelming number of participants are male. This indicates that male gender dominates the workplace in GPA which is an operational organization. It is revealed that social media is mostly used by males than females in GPA which could impact performance as most of the activities performed in GPA are conducted by men such as in the mechanical and security sections.

Table 1 above indicates that 25% of respondents are between the ages of 21 to 30, almost 40% are between the ages of 31 to 40. About 25% are between the ages of 41 and 50 and the remaining 9% are between 51 to 60 years. The dominant age group is between 31 to 40 years, which suggests that most of the users of social media are those who are within this age bracket.

The findings as per the above chart illustrate that 52% are diploma holders, 21% are first degree holders, another 20% are master's degree holders respectively and 5% attained other professional qualifications such as ACCA/CAT. This shows that GPA comprises of employees with diverse educational backgrounds. The respondents were asked to indicate their length of service. Table 4.1 above shows that the majority had worked for GPA for between 1 and 5 years at 33%, 29 % had worked within the organization for 6-10 years, 19.8% have worked between 11-16 years, and 17.9% have been with the organization for over 16 years. The table above indicates that many of the respondents were in junior level positions at 56.2%, 29.6% were middle level managers while 14.2% were senior level managers. This reveals that most of the employees under the general staff category are those that mostly use social media in the office. Determining how often employees use social media during work hour.

Table 2: Social Media Usage

		Frequency	Percentage %
Do you use social media	Yes	162	100.0%
	No	0	0.0%
	Total	162	100.0%
How many hours do you spend on social media per day	1-3 hours	134	82.7%
	1.6 hours	24	14.8%
	1-9 hours	3	1.9%
	1-20 hours	1	.6%
	Total	162	100.0%
How many hours do you spend on social media at work	0-1 hours	119	73.5%
	1-3 hours	33	20.4%
	3-4 hours	8	4.9%

		Frequency	Percentage %
	4-6 hours	2	1.2%
	Total	162	100.0%
Which social networking site do you use frequently	WhatsApp	136	84.0%
	Facebook	19	11.7%
	Tik Tok	4	2.5%
	Linked In	3	1.9%
	Total	162	100.0%
How frequently do you use the most frequent networking application you prefer (as stated above)	Hourly	66	40.7%
	Every 30 min	58	35.8%
	Once a day	37	22.8%
	Once a week	1	.6%
	Total	162	100.0%
What are the main activities that you conduct through social media	Social	20	12.3%
	Organizational	22	13.6%
	Personal	47	29.0%
	All of the above	73	45.1%
	Total	162	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, SPSS (2024).

The study inquired the level of staff usage of social media, and all the respondents answered yes, translating that all the respondents use social media at GPA. This shows that social media is a very popular means of connecting people which is used by almost everybody. The respondents were asked the number of hours they spend on social media per day. The response received indicated that 82% use it between 1 to 3 hours, 14% use it 1 to 6 hours a day, 2% responded that they use it between 1 to 9 hours a day and less than 1% use it between 1 to 20 hours.

Based on Table 2 above, it is suggested that 73.5% of staff use social media in the office for a period of 0 to 1 hour. A total of 20.3% use it between a time frame of 1 to 3 hours, staff who use it between 3 to 4 hours represent 5% whilst those who use it for 4 to 6 hours totals to 1 %. This indicates that majority of people use social media in the office for about 1 to 3 hours in a day. However, although most staff use social media for about hour or less.

From the findings, 83.9% of the respondents use WhatsApp frequently, this highlights that majority of those who use social media use WhatsApp quite often. Respondents who use Facebook is equivalent to 11.7%, and those who use Tik -Tok comprises of 2.4 % whilst only 1.8% use LinkedIn regularly. As illustrated on Table 2 above, 41% of GPA employees visit social media site every hour, this suggest that most users of social media visit sites hourly which may have an implication on the execution of their official functions.

About 36 % of respondents stated that they visit social media sites every 30 minutes which implies that some employees do use social media applications within every 30 minutes. Amongst the respondents 23% indicated that they use social media applications once a day, and 0.6% use social media once in a week. This suggests that less than 1% of

staff barely use social media. As per the above table 4.2, 45.08% of respondents conduct various activities on social media. 29.01% use it for personal reasons, 13.58% use it for organizational purposes whilst 12.35% use it to socialize.

Assessing the effects of social media on employee work performance

Table 3: Social Media Effects

		Frequency	Percentage %
Social media causes work distraction or misuse by employees during working hours in GPA	Strongly agree	41	25.3%
	Agree	68	42.0%
	Neutral	24	14.8%
	Disagree	22	13.6%
	Strongly disagree	7	4.3%
	Total	162	
Social media enhances communication and information sharing in GPA	Strongly agree	40	24.7%
	Agree	86	53.1%
	Neutral	19	11.7%
	Disagree	12	7.4%
	Strongly disagree	5	3.1%
	Total	162	
Social media leads to leakage of confidential data in GPA	Strongly agree	19	11.7%
	Agree	64	39.5%
	Neutral	34	21.0%
	Disagree	31	19.1%
	Strongly disagree	14	8.6%
	Total	162	
Social media increases the possibility of virus attacks on computers/systems in GPA	Strongly agree	27	16.7%
	Agree	52	32.1%
	Neutral	44	27.2%
	Disagree	33	20.4%
	Strongly disagree	6	3.7%
	Total	162	
In your opinion, do you think social media negatively affects employee performance	Strongly agree	16	9.9%
	Agree	61	37.7%
	Neutral	40	24.7%
	Disagree	34	21.0%
	Strongly disagree	11	6.8%
	Total	162	

Source: Field Survey, SPSS (2024).

In the illustration above in Table 3, many of the respondents which is equivalent 67% strongly agree or agree that social media distracts or is abused by employees in the office which causes distraction or is misused in the office. This implies that most people have the perception that social media distracts staff and may be abused in the office. About 17% strongly disagree or disagree that social media is a cause of distraction and possibly believe that its usage has no impact on performance. About 15% of the respondents were neutral and could not decide if social media is being misused in the office. From the above table about 77% of respondents strongly agree or agree that social media enhances communication and information sharing, 10% of the respondents had a different opinion strongly disagree or disagree 12% were neutral and were not sure if social media is a source of enhancing information.

Based on Table 3, about 51% strongly agree or agree that social media leads to information leakage in GPA. This can be interpreted as that most employees maintain the perception that social media leads to confidential information leakage. Using Facebook as an example, people post information that relates to the Institution on their personal pages without proper authorization. However, about 27% of the respondents strongly disagree or disagree. A considerable number, 21%, were neutral. According to the above table 4.3, 48% strongly agree or agree that social media increases the possible risk of virus attacks on computer devices in GPA. About 24% strongly disagree or disagree with the phenomena. A total of 27% of the respondents were neutral. As per the above table, most respondents, which is 47% strongly agree or agree that social media usage negatively affects employee performance. This implies that many people have the perception that social media really affects job performance in the Organization. Another 27% strongly disagree or disagree this is followed by those who cannot decide if it has a negative effect on performance at 25%.

Investigate the challenges faced in mitigating employees' use of social media during work hours.

Table 4: Challenges of minimizing social media usage

		Frequency	Percentage %
GPA may face employee resistance	Strongly Agree	17	10.50%
	Agree	52	32.10%
	Neutral	41	25.30%
	Disagree	45	27.80%
	Strongly Disagree	7	4.30%
	Total	162	
High cost of blocking access to social media on office equipment (PCs/Laptops)	Strongly Agree	25	15.40%
	Agree	64	39.50%
	Disagree	46	28.40%
	Disagree	18	11.10%

		Frequency	Percentage %
	Strongly Agree	9	5.60%
	Total	162	
Expenditure on getting rid of virus-inflicted systems	Strongly Agree	31	19.10%
	Agree	65	40.10%
	Neutral	45	27.80%
	Disagree	17	10.50%
	Strongly Disagree	4	2.50%
	Total	162	
Need to implement a social media policy	Strongly Agree	50	30.90%
	Agree	65	40.10%
	Neutral	27	16.70%
	Disagree	9	5.60%
	Strongly Disagree	11	6.80%
	Total	162	

Source: Field Survey, SPSS (2023)

With reference to the above Table 4, many respondents strongly agree or agree about 42% that the GPA may face employee resistance as a challenge if it tries to minimize or eradicate the use of social media in the office. This means that many of the respondents think that GPA may face challenges through employee resistance if it tries to discourage the use of social networks in the office. This is followed by 32%, which is those who strongly disagree or disagree to the same effect. Those who cannot decide if employees will resist in the event GPA tries to minimize social media are about 25% of the respondents.

Based on the table above, about 54 % strongly agree or agree that the challenge in curtailing social media usage in the office is the high expenditure on blocking access to social media sites on computers and laptops connected to the office network. A minimum of 16% of respondents strongly disagree or disagree with the statement. About 28% were not sure if the GPA will face high cost of blocking access to social media sites during office hours.

The table above shows that 59% of employees strongly agree or agree that the Authority will be challenged in cutting down social media usage, also the cost or expense of getting rid of virus inflicting on computers. Viruses cause computer devices to slow down in performance, missing files, frequent error messages and unexpected pop-up messages which can crash computers, rendering it unusable. A total of 13% tend to strongly disagree or disagree and about 27% were neutral.

Referring to the above table a considerate number of 71% strongly agree or agree that implementing a social media policy could be a challenge to the Authority. This could be because a policy would be developed and validated for adoption to guide employees on how social media should be used while in the office. About 12% strongly disagree or disagree with the statement, respondents who neither agree nor disagree is equivalent to 16%.

Table 5: Measurement Model Results

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Social media use	C-C-SM2	0.723	0.662	0.678	0.598
	C-C-SM3	0.765			
	C-C-SM4	0.757			
Employee performance	SM-E-WP1	0.849	0.615	0.618	0.560
	SM-E-WP3	0.730			
	SM-E-WP4	0.734			

Source: SmartPLS 4 output (2024)

Table 5 above shows the factor loading which is used to measure reliability of constructs social media usage and employee performance. The social media construct is measured with 3 items, which is C-C-SM 2 (0.723), C-C-SM 3 (0.765) and C-C-SM 4 (0.757). The employee performance is also measured with 3 items, SM-E-WP1 (0.849) SM-E-WP (0.730) and SM-E-WP4 (0.734). This is followed by the scores of Cronbach Alpha, composite reliability and AVE. The table provides the information on the Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability and average variance extracted. The composite reliability is 0.678 and 0.618 which is within the acceptable level of between 0.60 or greater to be considered. It is interpreted that the higher the composite reliability, the higher the level of reliability. The AVE is as per the table above 0.50 which is an indication that the constructs have established a convergent validity. The Average variance extracted entails the measure of a variance that captured by a construct with a relationship to the amount of the variance due to error of measurement. In table above, usage of social media indicates 0.598 for the average variance extract whilst for employee performance is 0.560. This signifies an impressive convergence as the benchmark is 0.50.

Discriminant Validity Assessment

In establishing the discriminant validity, the Fornell-larcker, cross loadings and Heterotrait monotrait ratio (HTMT) are used. The Fornell-larcker is based on the comparison between the squared construct correlation and the average variance extracted (AVE). This criterion contrasts the association of latent constructs with the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) (Henseler 2015). Instead of the variance of other latent constructs, a latent construct should be able to better explain the variance of its own indicator. Fornell-Larcker states that diagonal value should be larger than all values in the same row and column (Fornell-Lacker 1981). Comparing the HTMT to a predetermined threshold is necessary when using it as a criterion. If the value of the HTMT is higher than this threshold, it can be concluded that there is a lack of discriminant validity. In cross loadings, the loading of each indicator should be greater than the loadings of its corresponding variables' indicators. The cross loadings were assessed to confirm if each indicator's loading is greater than the loading indicator for the other variable. This criterion contrasts the association of latent constructs with the square root of the average variance

extracted (AVE) (Henseler 2015). Instead of the variance of other latent constructs, a latent construct should be able to better explain the variance of its own indicator.

Table 6 : Fornell-Larcker Criterion Results

	Employee-Work Performance	Social media @ work
Employee-Work Performance	0.773	
Social media @ work	0.547	0.749

Source: SmartPLS 4 output (2024)

Table 7: Cross Loadings Results

	Employee-Work Performance	Social media @ work
C-C-SM @W2	0.723	0.345
C-C-SM @W3	0.765	0.386
C-C-SM @W4	0.757	0.478
SM-E-WP3	0.482	0.849
SM-E-WP4	0.371	0.730
SM-E-WP5	0.408	0.734

Source: SmartPLS 4 output (2024)

The study has demonstrated the HTMT, cross loadings, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion are used to assess discriminant validity. The Fornell-Larcker formula is the square root of the AVE (diagonal value) for the variables, which in this study meets the requirement of being greater than the correlation of latent variables. Each indication loading in the cross loadings should be higher than the loading of the relevant variable, ensuring that the cross loading is also satisfied. The Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) value is fulfilled if less than 0.85 is required, the HTMT is also achieved. The discriminant validity has been met using the different criteria indicating that the variables have been investigated differently from each other.

Measurement Of Structural Model

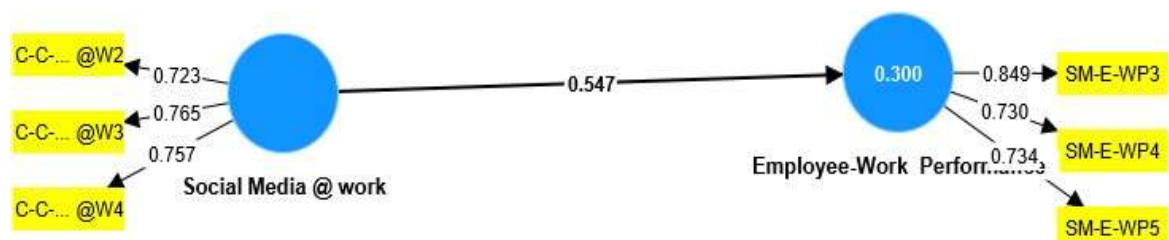


Figure 1: Path Analysis Result

Source: SmartPLS 4 output (2024)

The R^2 and the coefficients are the key measures for examining the structural model. The R^2 is a measure in determining the proportion of variance in a dependent variable that can be explained by an independent variable. As indicated in Figure 1, the model has R^2 variance of 30% for employee work performance. This indicates that the independent variable of the study predicts the independent variable by 30% which is weak (Sarstedt et al., 2021). The remaining 70% is an unexplained relationship of the variables. As per the path analysis, the figure indicates the path coefficient and P value of the hypothesis. According to Hair et al., 2011 and as cited by Henseler et al., 2009, the rule of thumb is acceptable for R^2 measures as 0.75, 0.50, 0.25, respectively, describing substantial, moderate, or weak levels of predictive accuracy. The hypothesis is supported which in turn indicates the path is significant between independent and dependent variable. H1 (0.547, $p < 0.05$) describes the path between social media usage and employee performance. According to the path analysis in Figure 1, it is demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between social media usage and employee performance.

Table 9: Test of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Path	Path Coefficient	P-Values	Hypotheses (Remarks)	Sign P < 0.05
H1	Social media use - > Employee Performance	0.547	0.000	Supported	Significant

Source: SmartPLS 4 output (2024)

Based on the above table, the path coefficient of H1 ($A = 0.547$, $p < 0.05$). It can be noticed that the hypotheses were supported, which indicates that the path is significant between the independent and dependent variable. According to Helm et al. (2009) it is suggested that the coefficient of plus 1 is an indication of a strong positive relationship and a coefficient of minus 1 indicates a strong negative relationship.

4. Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that social media forms a part of people's everyday lives to the extent of being used by employees during working hours. The objectives of the study were addressed as the frequency and purpose to which employees use social media are indicated. An assessment of the effects of social media on staff performance was revealed to be due to addiction which leads to lessened attention which is a threat to employee and organizational performance.

This study revealed that social media affects performance through time spent in its usage and trying to ban it by organizations may hinder organizational efficiency. As social media proved to have both negative and positive potential, GPA management should consider capitalizing on the positive sides of social media through using it as a communication tool which may assist in enhancing efficiency and performance. The leadership of GPA should come up with a policy framework to guide the use of social media during work hours.

However, the findings of the study cannot be generalized with other SOEs as the study is limited to Gambia Ports Authority only. It was time-consuming to collect the data using questionnaires because it takes longer for respondents to give feedback. The questionnaires

were not suitable for respondents who are less educated (such as the securities/quay laborers) as some of the respondents found it difficult to understand the language of the questions. Further research is recommended from the private sector organisations to be compared against the public sector organisations in The Gambia gauging the tolerance level and implications to performance.

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