

Perceptions of Undergraduate Students on Social Media for Learning: A Case Study of University of Ibadan

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ABSTRACT Today's world is a world of information explosion in every area of our day-to-day endeavor. Information technology invention is rapidly taking place around the globe that makes a literate individual feel as if he or she is ignorant because of the fast changes and rapid innovation of technology in the areas of Information Technology (ICT). Despite the drastic improvement in information and the better roles of social media in managing information, its usage among the university students is still insignificant. This study was carried out to examine the usefulness of social media in learning. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Thirty-five students from faculty of Education, Management Science, Communication and Information Science, Agricultural Science, Art and Technology were purposively selected for the study. The instrument used was researcher designed questionnaire on undergraduate perception on social media for learning in University of Ibadan which was used to gather information. The finding reveals that the undergraduate students subscribed to WhatsApp, google+, Facebook, yahoo messenger, 2go, BBM, Twitter to interact, exchange information and improve their knowledge. In conclusion of this study it is therefore recommended that students should be guided or encouraged in the use of social media for learning due to its various benefits.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of social media has truly solved problems of communication barriers especially communication via distance, because it has allowed its users with an unlimited flow of information from users to users (O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson 2011). It has really helped in breaking down distance restriction and barriers but despite numerous advantages of the social media like allowing easy connection with various online users on the internet, it has also made lifestyle to be more virtual than living in a real world. Social media seems to have made brands less significant (Jiao et al. 2017). What happened? The issue is, social media has transformed how culture works, in a way that weakens certain branding techniques (Hilverda 2017).

It has now been seen that the result of emerging technologies like the internet has created and transformed various ways of teaching and learning processes, which has helped our educational system with better opportunities (Hil-

verda 2017). Online learning like social media has demonstrated two methods of effective communication in learning that is, the synchronous and asynchronous learning methods. Tutors are challenged to focus student's attention more actively on online activities or in hybrid method of learning (Tsai et al. 2015).

Nwangwa et al. (2014) says social media comprises online applications for social networking sites, social bookmarking, sharing tools, social citation tools, blogging and micro-blogging tools, virtual worlds, e-conferencing presentation, audio and video tools, e-project management tools, research and writing with collaboration tools; primarily developed to foster user-centered social interaction. The term "social media" according to Kaplan and Michael (2010) referred to a system of internet-based tools and application that can build on the philosophy and ideological foundations of internet and Web 2.0, and that allow the production, creation and exchange of user-generated information.

Nwangwa et al. (2014) further categorized social media into eight areas that are inter-dependent by their mode of usage. The areas of categorization and their uses include:

- a. Social Networking Sites (SNS) allows for connection of people with friends and others who work, study and live around them and even in other country;
- b. Social Bookmarking and Sharing Tools allow users to save and share citation of academic papers amongst researchers;
- c. Blogging and Micro-Blogging Tools allow users to post multimedia and other content to a short-form blog;
- d. Virtual World is a platform that allows online users to socialize, connect and create virtual environment with the help of voice and text chat;
- e. Presentation Sharing Tools allows for sharing of information in PowerPoint and portable document format (PDF).
- f. Audio and Video Sharing Tools allow users to view and share pictures through video with friends;
- g. Research and Writing Collaboration Tools allows for capturing of knowledge, sharing of files and managing projects within a secure, reliable virtual environment;
- h. Project management, Meeting and Collaboration Tools allow users to communicate with peers by voice using a microphone, video by using a webcam, and instant messaging over the internet for the purpose of delivering high-quality learning experience to remote students.

According to Lim and Richardson (2016), making connections with classmates is the main purpose of social networking activities. Earlier researchers in the areas of social media has focused on the benefits to increase social presence by using them as a supportive tool to increase communication within learning.

Hamid et al. (2015) said, "Online social networking can also be distinguished from the social networking activities that occur offline (that is, face-to-face). In the literature, the terms social technologies and social media are often used interchangeably."

Literature Review

Nwangwa et al. (2014) explained that the group of "Net-generation enjoy spending more time on the social media than academic works."

Jones and Shao (2011) observed that the generation of the 21st century students get involved in computer games, email, the internet, cell phones, and instant messaging and therefore concluded that it has become part of their lives and further stated that these net generation students function at their best when they are networked.

Henderson et al. (2015) have also focused that there is a need to pay more attention towards the reasons why students engage with specific forms of digital technologies during their studies. This raises questions about the roles that these technologies are playing in student learning (Elkaseh et al. 2016). Many researches have influenced the usefulness of learning and teaching in general. For example, social networking media demonstrated in many studies have discovered a positive impact on learning and teaching foreign languages as they can enhance and improve students' written and oral language skills. Recently, several universities are providing access to social networking media to be utilized as e-learning tools to assist learners to access contents, course materials, and work together with colleagues as well as with teachers.

Junco and Cotten (2012) concluded that students become addicted to social media, it splits their attention thereby causing massive decrease in knowledge retention for them. Ellison (2007) reported that social media have widespread use among the students all over the world and also the time they spend on the social media site is on the increase. Glass et al. (2013) reported that on an average Facebook users spend much time to communicate between and among people, surfing the internet for important e-materials or for the need to make online business.

Selwyn and Stirling (2016) also reported on the impact of social media in education and user's experience beyond the wall of formal education. However, social media is students primary means of communication and a major source of getting materials and that a larger percentage of the respondents rarely use social media for the academic works but rather use it for making friends (Shafique et al. 2010). In another development, Lenhart et al. (2009) posited that using social media serves as a source of information for effective teaching and learning. He concluded that social media platforms are frequently used as information sources and how the information provided through social media was evaluated

and used. He further explained that Web 2.0 evolution brought more active participation, creation and content sharing. DeVito et al. (2017) also describe web 2.0 as securing information sharing, interoperability, and collaboration on the Worldwide Web. Oskouei (2010) stated that “internet is advantageous to both students and teachers if used as a tool of knowledge creation and dissemination. In social networks learning occurs when a self-selecting group of people who have a common interest in a subject collaborate to share ideas or find solutions (Schwen and Hara 2003).

Lee et al. (2008) considered social networking sites as educational tools. Students can use them for communication and social support as well as for discovering and sharing knowledge. Redecker et al. (2009) also suggested that students take social media applications as an addition to formal educational settings, offers new opportunities for innovating, learning and modernizing education institutions. Social networking is easy and quick in terms of accessibility, reviewing, updating, and editing learning material needs anytime and anywhere. On gender and social media stated that gender differences exist for adopted technologies from age 16-25. Lenhart et al. (2009) submitted that men and women were more likely to use social network sites frequently and that women outnumber men. Furthermore, women were more likely than men to use social networking sites (Tufekci 2008). Moreover, as reported by Tufekci (2008), that overall women were more likely to use social media for maintaining relationships with family and friends and entertainment. Women were also more likely than men to use the internet for relational communication (Baym et al. 2007).

Mazman and Usluel (2011) found out that females use Facebook for maintaining existing relationships, academic purposes and following agenda higher than males while males use it for making new relationships at a rate higher than the females. Tufekci (2008) also showed that there is significant difference between male and female on the utilization of social media. According to Palmer (2012) and Cheung et al. (2011), their studies through electronic forms of communication on gender-marked language say it is not enough to out rightly endorse the idea because it would be precarious to assume that a study on a function of the World Wide Web from 16 years ago is entirely relevant to SNWs today.

Females were found to have lower levels of satisfaction and desire more training with enterprise planning software compared to males (Lee et al. 2007). The driving force of male gender towards the utilization of social media tends to revolve around making new relationship in social network environments more than the female gender (Thelwall 2008). The study, therefore, will look into perception on social media for learning of University of Ibadan.

Research Questions

The following question are raised to guide this study:

1. Are students aware of the use of Social Media for learning?
2. What are the social media available for learning?
3. What are the perceptions of university students regarding the use of social media for academic purposes?
4. Why social media matters to the educational experience?
5. Is gender as a factor towards utilization of social media on learning?
6. Do social media influence undergraduates' learning style based on gender?

Objectives of the Study

The objective for conducting the study is to explore undergraduate student perception on social media for learning, especially to:

1. Examine if students are aware of Social Media for learning.
2. To determine the types of social media available for learning.
3. Determine students' perception of the social media used for learning.
4. Know why social media matters to the educational experience.
5. Determine gender as a factor towards utilization of social media on learning.
6. Identify the influence of social media on undergraduates' learning style based on gender.

Scope of the Study

The study will focus on the undergraduate student's perception on social media: Friendster, Flickr, Myspace, Badoo, LinkedIn, 2go, In-

tagram, Skype, BBM, on learning in University of Ibadan, Oyo State, and will be carried out between 175 undergraduate students, 35 students in five faculties in University.

METHODOLOGY

This study was a descriptive research of the survey type. Undergraduate students of University of Ibadan were randomly selected with the total sample size of 175 between five faculties. In this university, students were selected by adopting random sampling technique to select the sample population. The instrument used for this study was questionnaire titled undergraduate student perception on social media in learning. There are two sections A and B. Section A involves bio-data of respondents while the other section contains the research questions. The general issue to be raised in the questionnaire would be on how student perceive social media for learning. Two lectures from ICT department of University of Ilorin checked the questions for clarity, appropriateness, correctness, commensuration of questions with the topic of the research and other necessary criteria for the validity and reliability of instrument. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to the undergraduate students of university of Ibadan, in five faculties: faculty of art, management science, communication and information science, education, agricultural science. The researcher waited for the students to fill the questionnaires and collect them. In this study, data collected from selected students was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages).

RESULTS

A total of 175 students (35 each across 5 faculties) participated in the study, while the high-

est proportion (49.7%) of the students was in 300 level (Table 1). Furthermore, majority of the students, (63.4%) were males, while more of the respondents were within the age range 21-25 years (58.3%) (Table 1).

Table 1: Personal characteristics

Variable	Frequency (N=175)	Percentage
<i>Faculty</i>		
Art	35	20
Agriculture	35	20
Education	35	20
ICT	35	20
Management sciences	35	20
Total	175	100
<i>Level</i>		
100	33	18.9
200	55	31.4
300	87	49.7
Total	175	100
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	111	63.4
Female	64	36.6
Total	175	100
<i>Age Range</i>		
15-20	55	31.4
21-25	102	58.3
26-30	14	8.3
Above 30	4	2.3
Total	175	100

Faculty

The result also revealed that, majority of the respondents are aware that social media exist (mean=3.87, SD=0.33), and that it can be used for learning (mean=3.70, SD=0.51) while the least proportion of the respondents agreed that they don't think effective learning can take place on social media (mean=2.17, SD=0.87) (Table 2).

Considering the availability of social media for learning, the highest accessible among the 15 media itemized was WhatsApp (88%) which was closely followed by Facebook (87.4%) and Google+ (78.9%). Furthermore, Twitter, Yahoo

Table 2: Students awareness of the use of social media for learning

S. No.	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	$\bar{X}$ (%)	SD (%)
1	I am aware that social media exist	153 (87.4)	22 (12.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.87	0.33
2	I am aware that social media can be used for learning	125 (71.4)	48 (27.4)	1 (0.6)	1 (0.6)	3.70	0.51
3	I have a social media account	133 (76.0)	33 (18.9)	7 (4.0)	2 (1.1)	3.70	0.60
4	I have many social media account for special purposes	64 (36.6)	84 (48.0)	25 (14.3)	2 (1.1)	3.20	0.72
5	I don't think effective learning can take place on social media	13 (7.4)	44 (25.1)	78 (44.6)	40 (22.9)	2.17	0.87

Table 3: Availability of social media for learning

S. No.	Items	Yes (%)	No (%)	$\bar{X}$	SD
1.	Hi5	9 (5.1)	166 (94.9)	1.95	0.22
2.	Friendster	10 (5.7)	165 (94.3)	1.94	0.23
3.	Flickr	18 (10.3)	157 (89.7)	1.9	0.3
4.	Myspace	23 (13.1)	152 (86.9)	1.87	0.34
5.	Badoo	26 (14.9)	149 (85.1)	1.85	0.36
6.	LinkedIn	38 (21.7)	137 (78.3)	1.78	0.41
7.	2go	60 (34.3)	115 (65.7)	1.66	0.48
8.	Instagram	66 (37.7)	109 (62.3)	1.62	0.49
9.	Skype	71 (40.6)	104 (59.4)	1.59	0.49
10.	BBM	84 (48.0)	91 (52.0)	1.52	0.50
11.	Yahoo messenger	86 (49.1)	89 (50.9)	1.51	0.50
12.	Twitter	92 (52.6)	83 (47.4)	1.47	0.50
13.	Google+	138 (78.9)	37 (21.1)	1.21	0.41
14.	Facebook	153 (87.4)	22 (12.6)	1.13	0.33
15.	Whatsapp	154 (88.0)	21 (12.0)	1.12	0.33

messenger and BBM were accessible on the average level, while the least accessible was Hi5 (Table 3).

Table 4 revealed that most of the respondents visited their social media site when they feel like, some are always online, while some visit their site once a week and some several times a day but the least number of all are the respondents that visited their site once a month.

Table 4: Students visitation on the social media

S. No.	Items	Frequency	Percent
1	Once a month	2	1.1
2	One hour per day	13	7.4
3	When I feel like	103	58.9
4	Once a week	7	4
5	Always online	47	26.9
6	Not at all	3	1.7

Evaluating the perception of the students on the use of social media for learning, the highest perception was that social media is a useful

tool for learning purposes (mean=3.34, SD=0.62). Following suite was the perception that interacting with social media site is clear and understandable for learning (mean=3.07, SD=0.65), while the least perception was that it is difficult to use social media site without consulting others for learning (mean=2.19, SD=0.81) (Table 5).

Considering the opinions of the respondents on why social media matters to the educational experience, the highest opinion was that they intend to use social media in learning as often as possible (mean=2.99, SD=0.72). Following suite is the opinion that they will advocate for the use of social media in education because of its convenience and relevance (mean=2.96, SD=0.71). The least opinion as indicated by the students is the fact that they will make a social media site their home page for learning purpose (mean=2.73, SD=0.78) (Table 6).

Exploring gender as a factor towards utilization of social media for learning, the study revealed that a high proportion of the respondents opined that female students prefer using social

Table 5: Perception of Undergraduate Students on the use of Social Media for learning

S. No.	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	$\bar{X}$	SD
1.	Social Media is a useful tool for learning purposes	74 (42.3)	87 (49.7)	14 (8.0)	0 (0.0)	3.34	0.62
2.	Interacting with Social Media Site is clear and understandable for learning	43 (24.6)	101 (57.7)	31 (17.7)	0 (0.0)	3.07	0.65
3.	It is necessary to be skillful while using social media for learning	31 (17.7)	92 (52.6)	43 (24.6)	9 (5.1)	2.83	0.78
4.	It is difficult to use social media site without consulting others for learning	14 (8.0)	36 (20.6)	95 (54.3)	30 (17.1)	2.19	0.81
5.	Most social media are solely for pleasure only	32 (18.3)	49 (28.0)	68 (38.9)	26 (14.9)	2.50	0.96

Table 6: Why social media matters to the educational experience

S. No.	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	$\bar{X}$	SD
1.	I will make a social media site my homepage for learning purpose	23 (13.1)	93 (53.1)	47 (26.9)	12 (6.9)	2.73	0.78
2	I plan on using the social media for learning for future job on a regular basis in the future	25 (14.3)	101 (57.7)	38 (21.7)	11 (6.3)	2.87	0.76
3	I would advocate for the use of social media in education because of its convenience and relevance	35 (14.3)	101 (57.7)	38 (21.7)	11 (6.3)	2.80	0.76
4	I professional programme to gain competency in the use of social media in education	25 (14.0)	101 (57.7)	38 (21.7)	11 (6.3)	2.80	0.71
5	I intend to use social media in learning as often as possible	33 (18.9)	99 (6.6)	34 (19.4)	9 (5.1)	2.89	0.76

media in posting pictures rather than using it for learning (mean=3.34, SD=2.39), while the least proportion of the respondents opined that social media improves male students' performance in class than female student when used for learning (mean=2.43, SD=0.87) (Table 7).

The assessment of the respondent's opinion as to whether social media influence undergraduate's learning style or not indicates that more of the respondents supports the statement that they always visit social media sites in order to acquire academic materials for learning purpose (mean= 2.74, SD=0.84). This was closely followed by the opinion that they understand and learn better when using social media for learning (mean=2.73, SD=1.77). The least opinion is that of the fact that they are always dis-

tracted when they use social media for learning (mean=2.46, SD=0.94) (Table 8).

DISCUSSION

This study explored students perception on social media for learning. They are all aware of social media and accepted that it is easy to get educational information or material on social media. The study indicated that social media in learning is flexible as it can be done anytime and anywhere.

The research findings indicated that most of the undergraduate students were using social media site. Participants in this study indicated that the social media they visited the most were WhatsApp, Facebook, google+, twitter, yahoo

Table 7: Gender as a factor towards utilization of social media on learning

S. No.	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	$\bar{X}$	SD
1	Male students get distracted than female students when making use of social media for learning.	32 (18.3)	40 (22.9)	81 (46.3)	22 (12.6)	2.47	0.93
2	Female students prefer using social media in posting pictures rather than using it for learning	68 (38.9)	71 (40.6)	33 (18.9)	3 (1.7)	3.34	2.39
3	The use of social media for learning influence female student to new learning style	22 (12.6)	91 (52.0)	57 (32.6)	5 (2.9)	2.74	0.71
4	Male students use social media in other to acquire academics materials	15 (8.6)	81 (46.3)	67 (38.3)	12 (6.9)	2.57	0.75
5	Social media improves male students performance in class than female student when used for learning	23 (13.1)	52 (29.7)	78 (44.6)	22 (12.6)	2.43	0.87

Table 8: Do social media influence undergraduates' learning style

S. No.	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	$\bar{X}$	SD
1.	I login to social media sites for the purpose of learning	20 (11.4)	85 (48.6)	59 (33.7)	11 (6.3)	2.65	0.76
2.	I always visit social media sites in order to acquire academic materials for Learning purpose.	31 (17.7)	78 (44.6)	53 (30.3)	13 (7.4)	2.74	0.84
3.	Social media is the best medium through Which I can learn.	20 (11.4)	61 (34.9)	75 (42.9)	19 (10.9)	2.47	0.84
4.	I understand and learn better when using Social media for learning.	25 (14.3)	80 (45.7)	50 (28.6)	20 (11.4)	2.73	1.77
5.	I am always distracted when I use social media for learning.	29 (16.6)	49 (28.0)	71 (40.6)	26 (14.9)	2.46	0.94

messenger, 2go, BBM, skype and Instagram. Most of students visited their social networking sites when they feel like. The findings is in agreement with the study of Selwyn and Stirling (2016) and Lee et al. (2008) who reported the usefulness of social media as stimulants for students to pay more attention to instructions.

These students realize the capability of social media sites to improve their performance if they use social media for academic purposes. Interestingly, students find it easier to use social media as they agreed that many of the social media sites does not need an expert or need to be skillful before using it. Students realized the benefit they achieved by using social media for learning, which is a platform' for connectivity and interactivities. Often time's students interact, exchange information and improve their knowledge and communicate with their instructors

CONCLUSION

Social media has become an interestingly popular learning approach in higher educational institutions due to rapid growth of internet technologies. This research has studied and has made some findings on social media as a means of communication in learning. Also the use of social media in the classroom have been seen to have result in positive psychological effects. All tertiary institutions may benefit from recognizing the enormous value in blending the best traditional learning and teaching experience with those enhanced by the emerging technologies such as Google, Google+, WhatsApp, Facebook, 2go and the likes.

The entire range of social media mentioned above share the innate ability to enable social

behaviour through dialogue, multiple-way discussions and providing the opportunity to discover and share new information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations become necessary in relation to undergraduate learning possibility through social media.

1. There should be seminars for student regarding the proper utilization of all the social media technologies (example, Facebook, WhatsApp, baddo, 2go, google and so on) so that learners will not misuse those sites and blogs.
2. Efforts should be intensified to improve the access to Internet and use of social media to learners in terms of the price to acquire the desired or needed ICT technology.
3. Government should provide for institutions at all levels with adequate information-technology facilities. Using this technology allows content to be more accessible and flexible for student, which may enhance the quality of student learning.
4. Both male and female should always make use of social media in a more productive way.
5. Educators to embrace the latest technology and explore ways to harness student engagement for activities that work in conjunction with, not against, their pedagogical philosophies and learning goals.

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