



Towards Enhancing Quality Learning Among Undergraduate Students In Nigeria's Universities: The Place Of Social Media Networking

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ABSTRACT:

Given that social media networks have proliferated rapidly, it was hypothesized that the classification of universities attended by undergraduate students would influence their utilization of social media. It was felt that students in privately owned universities as a result of their higher family background, better social status and economic advantage which should afford them a better access to electronic devices and telecommunication gadgets would make a better use of social media for learning than their counterparts in public universities. Two research hypotheses were tested in this study, a descriptive research of the survey type was employed, and 635 undergraduate students were sampled from a privately owned and a public university. Two validated research instruments tagged 'USSMCUS' and 'USSMFU' which were found reliable were used to gather data. Although there was a significant difference in the utilization of different social media concepts for learning by undergraduate students in both privately owned and public university, there was not a significant difference between most of the individual forms of social medium. It was found that the extent of social media network utilization by undergraduate students in public universities for learning was low. In privately owned universities on the other hand, the utilization level of social media network was high. Since there was no evidence indicating that undergraduate students in the two universities had interest and affinity for specific forms of social media networks and that this interest led to their extent of utilization, this was recommended for further studies.

KEYWORDS: Electronic Devices, Mobile Digital Devices, Social Status, Economic Advantage, Public University, Privately Owned University

1. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW:

The revolutionary tide blown across the globe by the proliferation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has left no stone unturned as it has impacted on our social, cultural, economic, political, religious and most peculiarly educational

life. The interactive networks of internet accessed through telecommunication gadgets gave rise to the use of ICT in our daily lives. Aderogba and Abanikannda (2009) stated that there has been an increased interest in the use of electronic network to support distance and electronic learning around the world, which has

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assisted collaborative learning and also provided access to electronic libraries and multimedia education. This system unequivocally metamorphosed into electronics super highway called ICT. The use of ICT has assisted greatly in connecting and interacting with a very wide and unlimited audience all over the world.

The connectivity brought about through ICT has consequently led to the advent of social media networking through social networking sites. Baruah (2012) referred to social media networks as the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. These social media networks have become so popular that students rarely live without them. Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined social network site as a web based service which allows people to sign up in a bounded system while articulating group of people within the same system for the purpose of sharing personal as well as academic related information. McCann (2012) spoke about social media as online platforms for keeping in contact with their peers. Social media such as Facebook, Google, MySpace and others are designed to facilitate social interaction and information exchange (Barczyk, 2013). Other media include Faces.com, Faceparty, Livejournal, SixDegrees, 2go, Whatsapp, Twitter, Tumblr, Plurk, Messaging, Geocities, MySpace, Google +, Friendster, IRC and Instant, LinkedIn and most recently Telegram.

Social media networking has become part of daily life experience for an increasing number of students using social networks. The advent of globalization as a result of urbanization and civilization such as internet, global system of mobile communication, television and cable network programmers have relegated by series of online dating and blog. Abanikannda (2016) claimed that social media has been accused of displaying studying time and thereby impeding intellectual abilities. Contrarily, he stated that for quite a while however, social networking has been a very important

instrument for facilitating academic activities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and beyond due to a howling growth in the use of the internet and the World Wide Web. Abanikannda established further that in contemporary world, social media has been a vital tool in the hands of undergraduate learners. Griffith and Liyanage (2008) found that instant messaging, wikis, blogs, discussion boards, and other Web 2.0 facilities could provide support which can complement what is taught in a traditional classroom setting.

Oghenetega and Ejedafiru (2014) observed that social media have affected communication between people in educational community positively since the past decades, which has made life easy by this media in different areas such as academic, social and political for any that is connected to it. Awake (2011) attested to this when he submitted that social networking has become hugely popular. Olasunkanmi (2010) worked on social networking as a collaborative learning tool for distance learning students, his findings revealed that social networking as a collaborative learning tool develops higher level of thinking skills, enhanced students' satisfaction with the learning experience and develops social interaction skills. A study by Raihan, Hasan & Shamim (2013), stipulated that, online social networks have all components of fostering modern learning by promoting interdependent, personalized learning, learner centered in the process of acquiring knowledge. Towner and Mun˜oz, (2011) concluded that Facebook and education can indeed be connected.

Despite numerous favourable studies and writings supporting the positive influence and effect of social media in enhancing quality learning and high academic performance of students generally by assisting in collaborative, engaging and interesting modes of learning with the world at their fingertips, there are still some contrasting perspectives on the roles played by social media. Salvation and Adzharuddin

(2014) submitted that social media networks have no academic relevance since most of the users use it for socializing purposes. Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) reiterated that college students who use the 500 million member social network have significantly lower grade-point averages (GPAs) than those who do not.

Hamat(2012) concluded that social media network users spend more time for socializing rather than learning. In addition, a study by Kord (2008) found Social Media to have a negative influence on academic performance which he believed was potentially caused by the amount of time students were spending on social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter; 2.5 hours per day according to his study. Kord's study also found that there was minimal social networking interaction between students and staff.

Jacobsen and Forste (2011), however, indicate that electronic media use is negatively associated with grades. The multitasking nature of social media likely increases distraction and can sometimes be detrimental to students' performance. Hargittai & Hsieh, (2010) in his study found that the use of social media networks is not systematically related to students' academic performance. Lenhart (2010) reported that some schools in the United States, for instance, have tried to minimize cell phone distraction by eliminating cell phones on school property or allowing phones and engagement in social media at school but not in the classroom. In a survey of 102 students, 57% of the participants stated that social media have made them less productive (Kalpidou, Costin& Morris, 2011).

There are various forms of social media production. Constantinides and Fountain (2007) and Lehtimäki, Salo, Hiltula and Lankine (2009) divided social media into five main categories based on their application types into: Blogs and podcasts, social networks, communities, content aggregators, virtual worlds.

Gratton & Gratton (2012) grouped social media networks into six namely: Publishing which includes wiki platforms, lifeblog services and blog engines; Networking like MySpace, LinkedIn and Badoo, Localization which includes Yelp and Plancast; Playing as for innovative editors like Digital Chocolate and Kobojo and dedicated platforms like Hi5. Sharing with examples like Instagram for picture sharing, YouTube and Dailymotion for sharing videos, Slideshare for sharing documents and pinterest for sharing products. The last in the list of Gratton &Gratton (2012) is Buying: with Power Reviews, Boosket, Polyvore and Hunch falling into this group.

Moreover, another important classification is that provided by Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) in which there were two dimensions of systematic classification based on theories in field of media research and social processes, which are the two key components of social media. As for media component of vertical classification, Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) proposed that media will differ in the degree of "social presence" and "media richness". The higher the social presence, the larger social influence has on each communicator's behaviour, and social presence will be influenced by medium intimacy and immediacy. Meanwhile, the better quality and amount of information transfer, the more effective the media is. Regarding to horizontal dimension of classification, social processes were discussed by self-presentation and self-disclosure concepts. Self-presentation indicates the desire to control impressions on other people, while self-disclosure is highly occurs during conversation between strangers.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Over the years, the use of social media as well as visits to social networking sites have metamorphosed from use as mere platforms for social pleasure and entertaining engagements to learning tools for the 21st century learners and

professionals alike. The proliferation, expansion, and growth in popularity of social networking sites have become a matter of utmost concern for educators, researchers, moralists, religious leaders, administrators of institutions, information and communication specialists, information management experts, cybercrime security experts and psychologists and sociologists. These wide range of individuals and professionals have bothered greatly as to the beneficial as well as the associated social and security risks undergraduates face in the course of their social media networking. A most significant of such concerns particularly to educators and other stakeholders in the education system is the relevance that these social media networks and online networking sites have to promoting students' academic performance and quality learning. This study therefore investigated the relevance of social media networking in enhancing quality learning among undergraduate students in Nigeria's universities.

3. PURPOSE OF STUDY:

The purposes of this experiment were:

1. to investigate if the utilization of different social media concepts for learning by undergraduate students in public universities would be lesser than that of their counterparts in private universities.
2. to find out if the extent of utilization of different forms of social media for learning by undergraduate students in both public and private universities.

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES:

1. The utilization of different social media concepts for learning by undergraduate students in public universities would be lesser than that of their counterparts in private universities.
2. There will be a significant difference in undergraduate students' utilization of different forms of social media networks for learning between public and private universities.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

5.1 *Research Design*

A descriptive research of the survey type was adopted for this study since the researcher intends to obtain information on the relevance of social media in enhancing quality learning among undergraduate students in Nigeria's universities.

5.2 *Sample and Sample Techniques*

A four-stage sampling technique was adopted for this study. Firstly, a purposive random sampling technique was adopted to obtain two universities in Osun state, one being a privately owned university and the other being a public university. These two universities were purposively sampled based on equivalence due to some characteristics they share. For instance, the two universities employed for this research have undergraduate students who fall across the different classes of family background and social status. There are both male and female students in the two universities. The two universities provide internet access to students but at an affordable cost, and they both have facilities like computer laboratories, students' hostels, well equipped library, regular power supply and alternative power supply in case of power outage.

Secondly, a purposive sampling technique was thereafter used to identify a population of students in each stratum with previous semester cumulative grade point not below 2.5 (second class lower division), this was to ensure that the caliber of students in the study sample were not low performers who are academically below average but quality learners.

Thirdly, stratified random sampling was thereafter used in selecting sample size for this study. By implication, the researcher arranged the undergraduate students in each school into strata based on their educational levels namely: 100, 200, 300 and 400 level, and the faculties they belonged to. In order to achieve a higher degree of precision, the researcher

based the selection on proportions. That is, the number selected from each stratum was on the basis of the proportion of students in all the strata.

Lastly, after this, the researcher applied the simple random sampling technique to select students from the list in each stratum. About three hundred and thirty five undergraduate students were drawn from all six faculties available in the POU ranging across One hundred to four hundred level, while three hundred undergraduate students were sampled from ten of the thirteen faculties in the PBU ranging across One hundred to four hundred level. The researcher and research assistants ensured that all respondents were able to read, write, study, interpret and ask questions, so as to be fit for fit for the experiment.

5.3 Research Instruments

To test for the difference in the relevance of social media to undergraduate students learning in the two universities, two researcher-designed rating scales were used namely: University Students’ Social Media Concept Utilization Scale (USSMCUS) and University Students’ Social Media Form Utilization Scale (USSMFUS). The USSMCUS was made up of a scale containing the two categories of social media concepts from where undergraduate students ticked as appropriate. The USSMFUS on the other hand comprised of 19 items which are all various forms of social media from where undergraduate students picked the ones utilized by them for learning and which has enhanced the

learning of concepts within the curriculum designed for their individual course of study. Both instruments have two sections titled A and B. Section A contains personal information about undergraduate students like level, faculty and department. Section B however contains information regarding concepts and forms of social media utilized respectively, while giving a very brief characteristic and few examples of each concept and form of social media in order to guide respondents appropriately.

5.4 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

Both research instruments USSMCUS and USSMFUS were validated by experts in tests, measurement and evaluation as well as specialists in media networking and their advice put into consideration in the final scales used for the study. To test the reliability of the research instruments, a trial test was carried out involving fifty undergraduate students from a university in Osun state that was different from the ones used for the main study. The instrument was re-administered on the same set of undergraduate students three weeks after. Pearson product moment correlation was used on the data collected. The reliability value for USSMCUS was found to be 0.83 while USSMFUS gave a reliability value of 0.91. Since these reliability coefficients were high and above 0.5, the instruments were thus adjudged appropriate for the purpose for which they were constructed.

5.5 Data Analysis and Discussions
One-way multivariate analysis of

Data Analysis and Discussions

Table 1: Means, Standard deviations and levels of significance for the Concepts of Social Media					
Social Media Concepts	Characteristics and Examples	Category	POU	PBU	Level of Significance
High Self-presentation/Self-disclosure	Blogs, Social network sites e.g. facebook	Mean SD	180.88 32.86	61.25 15.48	P< .001
Low Self-presentation/Self-disclosure	Collaborative projects e.g. Wikipedia, content communities e.g. youTube.	Mean SD	63.38 10.23	40.50 9.58	P<0.001

variance was used to determine statistical significance. The means, standard deviations and levels of significance for the two social processes under which the concepts of social media can be classified are shown in Table 1. Based on the fact that both variables were

highly significant at $p < 0.001$, the data appear to support the hypothesis that the utilization of different social media concepts for learning by undergraduate students in public universities would be lesser than that of their counterparts in private universities.

Table 2: Means, Standard deviations and Levels of significance for Various Forms of Social Media

Forms of Social Media	Characteristics and Examples	Mean SD	POU	PBU	Level of Significance
Blogs	Blogger, ExpressionEngine, Engadget, LiveJournal, Huffington Post, Open Diary, TypePad, Vox, WordPress, Xanga	Mean SD	6.00 3.63	3.38 2.72	P<0.124
Online Social networking	Facebook, Hi5, LinkedIn, MySpace, Orkut, Tagged, XING, Viadeo, Badoo, ASmallWorld, Cyworld,	Mean SD	42.13 11.96	15.25 3.28	P<0.001
Entertainment Platforms	Cisco Eos Active Worlds, Forterra Systems, Second Life, The Sims Online, Kongregate, Miniclip.	Mean SD	3.88 3.52	2.38 2.83	P<0.363
Wikis	Wikipedia, Wikia, PBworks, Wikihow, Wikitravel, Wetpaint, Wikimedia.	Mean SD	18.63 9.67	5.63 4.07	P<0.003
Photography and art sharing	Instagram, Flickr, Photobucket, Picasa, deviantArt, SmugMug, Zoomr, UstreamTV	Mean SD	22.88 8.76	6.63 3.20	P<0.001
Location-based social networks	Foursquare, Gowalla, Facebook places, The Hotlist	Mean SD	5.25 2.77	1.63 1.60	P<0.006
Mobile Messaging Application	Whatsapp, Telegram, Viber, WeChat,	Mean SD	76.50 13.92	24.75 7.42	P<0.001
Social news	Digg, Sladshot, Reddit, MyWeboo, Newsvine, Mixx.	Mean SD	4.75 3.66	1.63 2.62	P<0.069
Presentation and Video sharing	sevenload, Viddler, Vimeo, YouTube, Dailymotion, Metacafe, Nico Douga, Openfilm, TubeMogul, scribd, SlideShare	Mean SD	10.75 2.38	9.75 2.92	P<0.464
Social bookmarking	(or social tagging), CiteULike, Delicious, Diigo, Google Reader, StumbleUpon, folkd.	Mean SD	2.38 1.69	1.13 1.36	P<0.0124
Microblogging	FMyLife, Foursquare, Jaiku, Plurk, Posterous, Tumblr, Twitter, Path, Qaiku, Yammer, Google Buzz.	Mean SD	17.75 6.04	8.88 3.36	P<0.003
Social Questions & Answers	Askville, EHow, Stack Exchange, WikiAnswers, Yahoo! Answers Quora	Mean SD	1.75 1.91	0.75 1.75	P<2.293
Events	Eventful, The Hotlist, Meetup.com, Upcoming.	Mean SD	4.00 1.77	3.25 2.12	P<0.456
Online Advocacy and Fundraising	Causes, Kickstarter.	Mean SD	1.75 1.67	1.13 1.25	P<0.410
Document Managing and Editing Tools	Dropbox, Playdompcap, Google Docs, Docs.com, Zynga.	Mean SD	5.63 3.07	4.38 2.07	P<0.355

Social navigation	Trapster, Waze, StumbleUpon.	Mean SD	3.00 2.51	0.75 1.04	P<0.034
Music and audio sharing	ccMixter, Pandora Radio, Last.fm, ReverbNation.com, Spotify...) ShareTheMusic, The Hype Machine	Mean SD	4.00 2.27	2.38 2.20	P<0.168
Livecasting:	Justin.tv, Livestream, OpenCU, Skype, Stickam, Ustream.	Mean SD	8.63 2.50	6.38 3.16	P<0.137
Information Aggregators	Netvibes, Twine (website).	Mean SD	3.76 3.06	1.75 1.39	P<0.114

The means, standard deviations and levels of significance for the various forms of social media networks categorized along the divide of their common characteristic platform of interaction are shown in Table 2. It was found that only three of nineteen variables were significant at 0.001 level. These were ‘Mobile Messaging Application’, ‘Online Social networking’ and ‘Photography and art sharing’. Two at the 0.003 level, namely: ‘Wikis’ and ‘Microblogging’. One was also significant at 0.006level namely ‘Location-based social networks’. ‘Social news’ was marginally significant at the 0.069 level. ‘Social navigation’ was only significant at 0.034 level. However, a tendency for undergraduate students’ to utilize different forms of social media networks for learning in privately owned universities to be higher is indicated by the fact that all the means for undergraduate students’ utilization of different forms of social media networks for learning in private universities were higher than the means for undergraduate students’ utilization of different forms of social media networks for learning in public universities.

6. FINDINGS:

Generally, the data analyzed for this study strongly support the hypothesis that in public universities, there is lesser utilization of different social media concepts for learning by undergraduate students. This implies that undergraduate students in privately owned universities make a better use of different concepts of social media. This finding had been earlier supported by the works and

findings in studies like that of Baruah (2012), Oghenetega and Ejedafiru (2014), Awake (2011), Olasunkanmi (2010) and Raihan, Hasan & Shamim (2013),who stipulated that, online social networks have all components of fostering modern learning by promoting interdependent, personalized learning, learner centered in the process of acquiring knowledge. On the contrary, the finding of Salvation and Adzharuddin (2014) who submitted that social media networks have no academic relevance since most of the users use it for socializing purposes opposes the finding in the current study. Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) also has a contrasting position to the current finding. .Hamat (2012) does not also support the current finding as he concluded that social media network users spend more time for socializing rather than learning. In addition, a study by Kord (2008) found Social Media to have a negative influence on academic performance. Jacobsen and Forste (2011), however, indicated that electronic media use is negatively associated with grades. All these are opposed by the finding in the current study.

The fact that the three categories showing the most significant differences were: ‘Mobile Messaging Application’, ‘Online Social networking’ and ‘Photography and art sharing’, can perhaps be explained as a proportional difference. The three were among the most easily accessible social media networks. Since they had higher occurrences, the difference was more significant. The other forms of social media in the less significant categories may be slightly less accessible and less utilized. The same effect may explain the much greater significance of

'Wikis' and 'Microblogging' as compared to many other forms of social media with lesser significance. The findings on these three categories have been earlier supported by Towner and Munˆoz, (2011) who concluded that Facebook and education can indeed be connected. Griffith and Liyanage (2008) also supported this when he found that instant messaging, wikis, blogs, discussion boards, and other Web 2.0 facilities could provide support which can complement what is taught in a traditional classroom setting.

Although, as a whole, there was a significant difference between the utilization of different social media concepts for learning by undergraduate students in both privately owned and public university, there was not a significant difference between most of the individual forms of social medium. Inadvertent observations of some undergraduate students may offer explanation for this. It was observed that some of the students while accessing social media networks on the internet using their telecommunication gadgets, mobile devices as well as computer desktops and laptops had opened several social media among which they switched at intervals. This might have led to an insignificant difference in the utilization of a particular form of social medium above another by students of the same university. Hargittai & Hsieh, (2010) in his study found that the use of social media networks is not systematically related to students' academic performance.

Other reports that either supports or opposes the finding of this study is that of Lenhart (2010) who reported that some schools in the United States, for instance, have tried to minimize cell phone distraction by eliminating cell phones on school property or allowing phones and engagement in social media at school but not in the classroom. Kalpidou, Costin & Morris (2011) also stated that social media have made students less productive. Barczyk, 2013 believes that the use of social media facilitates interaction and

information exchange among learners leading to enhanced performance. Abanikannda (2016) maintained a dual position. The researcher opposes the finding of this study on one hand by claiming that social media displays study time thereby impeding intellectual abilities, on the other hand, his position however that, social networking has been a very important instrument for facilitating academic activities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is in tandem with the finding of this study.

It was found that the extent of social media network utilization by undergraduate students in public universities for learning was low. In privately owned universities on the other hand, the utilization level of social media network was high.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDIES:

It can be concluded that undergraduate students in public universities do not utilize social media for learning as much as undergraduate students in privately owned universities. This is most likely as a result of undergraduate students in privately owned universities being at a better economic advantage which has afforded them access to and procurement of electronic devices, telecommunication gadgets, mobile and digital devices, computer desktops and laptops as well as regular data bundles for accessing social media networks.

These results are not necessarily generalizable. There is no reason to believe that these two universities are peculiar in any way that would lead to lack of replication. Other explanations for the results are however likely. First, the schools were not fully equated along family status, social and economic background. Given that PBU has a larger number of undergraduate students with lower class family status and a moderately lower economic background than undergraduate students in POU, one would likely hypothesize results opposite

to those found here, however. Secondly, the rating scales were administered to undergraduate students at different times at the two schools. Also, the lecture time table and daily engagement schedule for students may differ between the two universities, thereby giving room for undergraduate students in the two universities to differ in the time available for accessing and navigating through social media networks. Moreover, the study did not employ gender as an independent variable and this probably might have provided useful information. The author is not convinced therefore, that any of the aforementioned could explain the highly significant results.

Since there is no evidence here to show that undergraduate students in the two universities had particular interest and affinity for specific forms of social media networks and that this interest led to their extent of utilization, further studies could be conducted in this regard, hence recommended.

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