

Undergraduates' Attitude Towards the Use of Social Media for Learning Purposes

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Abstract

The study investigated Undergraduates' attitude towards the use of social media for learning purposes. It was conducted at the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Two objectives and two null hypotheses was used to investigate the study. The population used were Undergraduate students from three faculties at the University of Port Harcourt. A sample of 300 students were randomly selected from three Faculties. Simple random stratified sampling techniques was used for the study and the instrument used to collect data was a structured questionnaire entitled Undergraduates' attitude towards the use of social media for learning purposes (UATUSMLP) with 42 items. Mean score, ANOVA, Z-test and Scheffe's model were the statistical tools for the study. The Instrument was given to experts in the field of educational technology to ensure its validity. Test retest was applied to ensure reliability of the instrument and a reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. It was found that social media are used for educational purposes in terms of quick growth in knowledge and information. It addition it was found that undergraduates bound with close and prospective groups for change. It is recommended that Universities should be acquainted with students want and concern in the schools.

Keywords: *Facebook; Twitter; WhatsApp; Skype; YouTube; Opera Mini and WeChat*

1. Introduction

Social media in education are used to foster learning by allowing for social interactions, active participation, and engagements of students in classroom discussion, communication (blended/online courses and social media solutions). Social media podium, like Facebook and twitter, grew seriously consolidating with different applications focusing on knowledge information, instruction or training. Instant news report and appropriateness makes the aim that could be used speedily and reliable, but the variation disposition makes it hard for school system to keep abreast and offset. Most students in tertiary institutions today are, functioning with social networking dais, and the services are previously gadgets that they are mostly enjoyable with and they can likely reveal a thing or two in exchange. According to Zdnet.com (2017), by learning how to use these platforms as a teacher, you are making yourself more aware of issues surrounding students today. If a student tells you a classmate is harassing them over Twitter doing something called "tweeting", how can you investigate the situation unless you know how to search profiles and send messages yourself? From current news feeds, following public figures, learning a new language or improving software skills, there is an endless range of free resources available through social media both linked and hosted. If you are looking for a debate, a video or commentary based on a recent news report, Facebook and Twitter's search functions make them a valuable and free set of tools. Being able to find information online is a skill that is now important in the workplace- and one that can be taught through lessons designed around social media platforms (Zdnet.com, 2017).

Swift evolution in ICTs have emerged within a society that will adjust excellently to similar growth. While the user-friendly system takes on major responsibility in the application, universality and instruction of founded instruction, personnel constitute one of the basis of knowledge society. The influence of ICTs in day-to-day lives boast expansion, in order words, influence student's attitude towards social media. Likewise, instant progress in

science, and technology controls educational institutions and alternative grounds. It is possible that information, communication, technology calls for the accomplishment of up to date technologies into educational institutions to upgrade the standards of education (Akkoyunlu & Tugrul, 2002; Aktumen & Kacar, 2003). Nevertheless, inclusion of technology into academic's schedule is a difficult and challenging task (Copper, 1998). It demands proceed into viewing countless socio-technical components such as instructor's computer abilities in addition to their reliance and viewpoint towards social media and also the utilization of ICTs in learning process, the technological setup inside the institution and its environment (Papanastasiou, 2008).

It is obvious that current technologies have being used in each sector of education. Computers allow students to learn separately, and to defeat draw back that will emerge out of their separate variations. Consequently, computers give rapid and lasting instruction utilizing component namely, sound and animation. Moreover, the net makes possible access to and splitting of news (Varol, 1999), hence, integrating ICTs, especially the net, into instruction and training in higher education boast key matters in both practically evolved and fast developing countries (Li & Kirkup, 2007).

The application of ICTs early provides current educational exposure for instructors and learners, how instructors and learners understand such redesigned achievement- their notions and participation in ICTs, their school of thought to instructional approach and their assumption are crucial part in the scenario for expanding ICTs in education (Smerdon, Cronen, Lanahan, Anderson, Lannotti, and Angeles (2000). Effective incorporation of computer into schooling setting rest on serious degree on instruction and learner's perspective towards ICTs need incorporation of schedule in school and align learners towards deciding their comprehension and their position towards technologies. Caputi (2000) study indicated that instructors approach can be described as either favourably or opposing with regards to computer technologies and computer assistance demand.

Social networking sites appeared, blending functionality of bulletin boards with personal profiles and immediate messaging tools, learners were prior embracers using the sites to reunite with friends and maintaining existing friendship and to prove personal support networks. Friends increased the objectives of what these spaces could do, and when Facebook started, learners were willing to experiment, interact, and share their networks online. Librarians and educators followed learners into these spaces, sharing practical instruction and trying other forms of engagement. The use of tools and technologies like YouTube, Twitter, Blogs, Wikis and Facebook, are used for teaching in higher institutions. Learners remain leaders of the adoption curve of social media users in different higher institution groups. Most notably, Marc Prensky 2001 attributed this to generational factors, students are extremely stimulated bounding with friends and social groups.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Social networking platform became greatly incorporated in the manner people react, think and relate with others. Media improves the field of education and impact learners, instructors, administrators and parent greatly. Learners use social media but they may not use it properly in classroom. Therefore, this study intends to find out if students use social media for educational purposes.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To ascertain the attitude of students towards the use of social media
2. To identify the preferred social media sites used by students for educational purposes

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the attitude of students towards social media for improved learning?
2. What are the preferred social media sites used by students?

2. Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey research designed to investigate undergraduates' attitude towards the use of social media for learning purposes. The population of the study comprised undergraduates' students in three faculties at the University of Port Harcourt. A sample of 300 students was used for the study. Simple random stratified sampling techniques was used for the study. The instrument used to collect data from respondents was a structured questionnaire entitled Undergraduates' attitude towards the use of social media for learning purposes (UATUSMLP) with 42 items. To ensure validity, the instrument designed by the researchers was given to experts in the field of educational technology. This was done to help the researcher assess the quality of each item in the context of clarity, ambiguity and generality of the items. Their various comments and assessment gave the researcher the conviction

that the instrument is appropriate and valid for the research. To determine the reliability of the instrument, test-re-test was applied, 20 copies of the instrument were administered to some students at two different occasions within three weeks. Their responses to the questionnaire items in the two separate responses were correlated to obtain the reliability co-efficient of 0.84. the responses from the questionnaire were weighed on the point four Likert type scale of strongly agreed, agreed, strongly disagreed and disagreed. Data obtained were analysed using mean score, ANOVA, Z-test and Scheffe's model.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Attitude of Students Using Social Media for Educational Purposes

S/N	Attitude of students	Mean	Standard deviation
1	Information communication technology has gradually improved and in turn leverage the change in students attitude towards ICTs	3.37	0.53
2	There is swift evolution in science and technology through ICT and has impacted educational system and other fields	3.41	0.54
3	ICT has involved the performance of new technologies into educational system to enhance the standard of education	3.41	0.59
4	I don't have ICT skills	1.08	0.29
5	Social networking gives beauty in learning online	3.38	0.54
6	Computer skill is advantageous to students	3.40	0.53
7	Social media technology has helped manage change	3.42	0.53
8	Students are highly stimulated by the demand to discover and bound with recent peers and possible social group	3.46	0.54
9	Friends are reunited by social networking sites	3.48	0.54
10	With the widespread use of tools and technologies like YouTube, Twitter, blogs, wikis and Facebook, social media improves students attitude towards learning	3.49	0.55
11	Communication is made easy	3.52	0.55
12	ICT gives new educational experience for students	3.51	0.55
13	Attitude on the use of social media in classroom is required	3.53	0.55
14	Getting research materials and books is a welcome development with the use of various social media sites	3.50	0.56
15	Students are skilfully ready to experiment, socialize and share ideas online for the purpose of change	3.46	0.57
Average Mean and Standard Deviation		3.90	0.53

The table revealed that students accepted most of the items as their attitude towards the use of social media for learning purposes. This is because all the items mean was above the criterion mean of 2.50.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in attitude on use of social media for improved learning among students in the various Faculties.

Table 2a: ANOVA

Source variation	Sum of square (SS)	Df	Mean of score (MS)	F-cal	F-tab
Between group	47195.666	2	23597.833	105.533	3.07
Within Group	62610.016	297	223.607		

Significant @ 0.05 level

Decision: F-Cal > F-tab, null hypotheses is rejected.

Table 2b: Scheffe test

Faculties	N	Mean Score
Faculty of Education	100	48.703
Faculty of Agriculture	100	49.707
Faculty of Engineering	100	50.540

Presentation

The result shows that there is no significant difference in attitude on use of social media for improved learning among students in the various Faculties. The Scheffe's model shows the difference between Faculty of Education (M= 48.703), Faculty of Agriculture (M= 49.707) and Faculty of Engineering (M=50.540). Therefore, the result shows that Engineering students explore social media more than Education and Agricultural Science students.

Research Question 2: What are the preferred social media sites used by students?

Table 3. Preference of Social Media Sites

S/N	Preferred media sites by students	Mean	Standard deviation
1	Facebook	3.75	0.46
2	Twitter	3.40	0.70
3	WhatsApp	3.33	0.22
4	Skype	3.15	0.84
5	YouTube	3.05	0.88
6	Opera Mini	2.97	0.99
7	WeChat	2.96	0.94
8	Badoo	2.46	0.21
9	Google+	2.42	0.95
9	Wiki	2.42	0.98
11	hi5	2.04	0.15
12	Eskimo	1.87	0.01
13	MySpace	1.78	0.97
14	Second Life	1.61	0.88
15	Word Press	1.60	0.84
16	LinkedIn	1.46	0.81
16	Tumbir	1.46	0.74
18	Pinterest	1.42	0.71
19	Tribe.net	1.40	0.78
20	Blackboard	1.28	0.68
20	Classmate	1.28	0.67
22	Netlog	1.19	0.49
23	Teach Street	1.18	0.54
24	Science Stage	1.16	0.48
24	Students Circle Network	1.16	0.48
26	Moodle	1.15	0.53
27	Tagged	1.11	0.37
	Average mean and Standard Deviation	2.00	0.39

The table revealed that students accepted few of the items as their preferred social media sites. This is because most of the sites are foreign and are not used in this part of the country. Therefore, the mean was below the criterion mean of 2.50.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between Male and Female students on social media usage.

Table 4. Z- Test

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	Zcal	Ztab	Remark
Male	140	107.958	15.168	299	2.935	1.96	Significant
Female	160	114.426	21.388				

$P < 0.05$; significant @ 0.05 levels

Decision: $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$, null hypotheses is rejected

Entries from table 4 show mean of 107.958 social media usage for male respondents while mean score of 114.426 was recorded for female respondents. The z-cal value of 2.935 which is greater than the Z-cal value of 1.96 suggests that significant difference exist between social media usage of male and female respondents. The result indicates that significant differences exist in social media preference between respondents. An overall mean of 2.00 suggests that there are social media sites that students preferred. The result reveals that social media sites that are preferred by students for educational purposes include Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, YouTube, and opera mini. The sites could be wonderful tools for building a sustainable and life-long social network and building an extended community learning environment.

The result is expected because most students already have social networking accounts and are used to getting resources/materials for educational purposes on the sites. The finding of the present study is in agreement with those Mc Carthy (2010), and Bosch (2009) who also found out that there is activities like Twitter, Skype, Whatsapp, Opera mini, Wechat and YouTube are recognized as a respectable learning platform.

However, findings disconcertant with the present one were found by Wise, Skue & Williams (2011) argue that Facebook and other social networking sites have deficiency in aiding student engagement. The difference in the result could be because the present study was carried out in schools where technology and the use of social networking is encouraged and discussed in classroom.

4. Conclusion

The conclusions made by the researchers are to wit:

- students can explore topics that they are interested in through online social networking.
- Students use Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Skype, YouTube, Opera Mini and WeChat for educational purposes.

5. Recommendations

- It is important for Universities to include the various forms of social networking into school curriculum.
- It should be made compulsory to enhance communication skills.

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