



SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS TO LECTURES IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA: THE DIMENSIONS AND PROSPECTS

Iyanuoluwa Adetayo Aluko*¹ and Gbenga Olaniyi Efunwole (Ph.D.) *²

¹ Department of Library, Arts and Social Science Education, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria.

² Department of Science and Technology Education, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria.

*Email of Corresponding Author: gefunwole276@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Over the years, social media has become an active technological tool in Nigeria. It is a news and communication channel that has made dissemination of information easy, with a snap of the finger on cellphones for teeming population; especially among the technologically savvy youths / students in various institution of higher learning. Higher education curriculum do emphasize integration and use of technology in teaching and learning, despite low policy implementation. This paper investigated the influence of social media usage on the attitude of students to lectures, in private universities. It also discussed its implications on academic performance and counselling. The paper adopted the use of descriptive survey research design approach. Three hundred (300) questionnaires (187 online and 113 manual) of twenty (20) items, were used to collect data from students across the nine (9) faculties in the randomly sampled six (6) private universities in the South-Western States of Nigeria. Data was analyzed using SPSS App / Percentages. Findings from the study revealed that students' subscribed to the efficacy of social media on their studies (75.9%) than for fun (24.1%). It also revealed that students' confessed to have adequate knowledge of social media as the major influence of their academic performance (67.2%), while 32.8% disagreed. The study therefore concluded that the irresistible usage of social media among students (youth) has significantly contributed to the recorded poor attendance at physical classroom lectures. The study recommended that the use of social media for meeting with students after physical classroom / online classrooms should be encouraged and integrated in instructional delivery process in tertiary institutions, to enhance knowledge and skills acquisition for sustainable national development.

Keywords: *Social Media, Students' Attitude, Lectures, Private Universities.*

1. Introduction

Social Media can be defined as the most important part of the experience of using the internet. It is a group of internet-based applications that build on the set of ideas and scientific knowledge that allows the making and changing of contents. Social media cover all technology that ensures social interactions, which include electronic blogs, audio/video tools (YouTube and Social Networking) and so on. Social media is internet-based with unrelenting channels or platforms of communication which facilitates insights of communication among users and obtain value from the content of users. It makes use of computer software that enable users to make content, view them and publicly share them to other subscribers / users. Social media can be defined as interactive technologies and digital channels that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, interests and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks.

According to Lenhart (2010), social media is a system and communication channel, such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and so on. YouTube is a revolution in the media world because of its

necessity as interface in the world of communication that is not possible to post video online. Social media has lots of advantages and disadvantages. Its advantages include: online connection with families and friends without stress, sending messages, breaking news, widely publicized business advertisement (with graphics, pictures / images, texts and voice notes), and also for effective instructional delivery of subject / course content. The disadvantages are: cybercrime, kidnapping, video clips on drug abuse and other social vices. Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist with Ferdinand Tonnies – German sociologist believed that there could be social groups because members of the society share values and beliefs. His theory was based on the society and social connections while Durkheim combined empirical research with sociological theory.

In the late 1800s, radios and telephones were used for social interaction but radio was a one-way interaction. In 1960s, email was invented and being used, but it wasn't available to the public until 1991. Today, digital media tools make two-way communication possible. Many social networking sites that allow interaction were created in 1990, among them are: Six Degrees, Black Planet, Asian Avenue, MoveOn, etc. in addition to these were blogging services

such as Blogger and Epinions. As of 2021, the number of people using social media is over 4.48 billion worldwide. Social media is a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through the building of virtual networks and communities. Social media ranges from Facebook, WhatsApp, twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and YouTube. Thirty-three (33) million Nigerian are active users of social media. Social media has negatively affected students' attitude to lectures especially in private universities in Nigeria. Students' lackadaisical attitude to lectures cannot be over-emphasized.

Private universities are institutions of higher learning, usually not operated nor owned by governments. They may and often do receive tax breaks, public student loans and grants, depending on their location. It may also be subject to government regulation. Students are group of people who is devoted to learning and scholarship. They are those who seeks knowledge from professional teachers or other sources, as the students of an academy, a college or a university. Students' attitude is their tendency to respond to a certain way towards something. There are three main components of attitude and they are: Cognitive, Affective and Intentional. Lecture is a speech read or delivered before an audience or class, especially for instruction or to set forth some subject. It is

also an oral presentation intended to present information or teach people about a particular subject.

According to Will (2017), seventy-three (73) percent of teachers think that social media and inappropriate texting affects students' writing and spelling skills. The survey also found that students do struggle with grammar, meaning and comprehension in English language studies. In a recent study by Efunwole and Sijuwade (2021), it was discovered that social media has influence on the students' choice of university's choice of course and eventual future career. This study therefore seeks to investigate effects of social media usage on students' attitude to lectures in private universities.

2. Statement of the Problem

Most of the undergraduate students have become a problem to effective instructional delivery in schools and institutions for functional life-long learning. This is due to their addiction to the social media, which makes them lessen attendance at lectures and thus sometimes boycott lectures. This is seriously frowned at by lecturers, because the habit is against the rules guiding students' conduct and administration of examination in institutions of higher learning. For instance, a student will qualify to sit for examination in any course if and only adjudge to

have scored seventy-five (75) percent in lecture attendance.

With the provision of search engines, webinars and other instructional audios / videos on the World Wide Web (www); studies have shown that students prefer independent studies to classroom lectures. This study therefore looked at the dimensions and prospects of the use of social media vis-à-vis provision of quality education to Nigerian children.

Attendance at lectures is regarded as one of the key requirements from students (as specified in Handbooks) to be successful in any academic endeavor. One of the most critical issues confronting students, especially at the intersection of secondary and tertiary levels of education is poor attendance at lectures. For instance, factors such as quality of instruction, precedence, teacher's personality, opportunities, socio-economic background and environment where the students live were identified as reasons for students' attendance at lectures. However, there is a dearth of research on the role of the now ubiquitous social media usage as a possible determinant of students' attendance at lectures. It was this knowledge gap that the paper addressed.

3. Purpose of the Study

The main objective of this research was to find

out what students understand "social media" to mean and their usage; assess level of influence it has on their attendance to lectures; investigate other factors that contributed to students' poor attendance at lectures; and suggest possible ways out of the social menace among students of private universities. It also discussed implications of findings to instructional media production and communication, guidance and counselling in schools at this digital age.

4. Methodology

Survey research method was adopted for the study, since it was an audience research necessitating opinions, attitudes, motivations and individualistic consideration. A research instrument tagged "Social Media Usage and Students Attitude to Lectures Questionnaire - (SMUSALQ)" was used to collect data, while the validated questionnaire was administered on students across the Faculties and Departments of the randomly sampled six (6) private universities across the South-Western States in Nigeria. Data collected were analyzed using SPSS / percentage.

5. Results and Discussion

The results of the analyzed data collected from a total of two hundred and forty-eight (248) respondents to questionnaire, out of the three hundred (300) questionnaires administered are

as presented below. Findings deduced from the analyzed data are as discussed below:

Analysis Based on Biographical data

Table 1. *Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Information.*

	Variables	Freque ncy	Percent age (%)
Gender	Male	118	47.6
	Female	130	52.4
	Total	150	100
Age	12-15 years	126	50.8
	16 - 18 years	29	11.7
	19 - 21 years	62	25.0
	22 – 25 years	31	12.5
	Total	248	100.0
Level	100	121	48.8
	200	92	37.1
	300	23	9.3
	400 / 500	10	4.0
	Total	248	100.0
Departm ent	Mass Communica tion	125	50.4
	Law	23	9.3
	History	10	4.0

Faculty	Internationa l Relations	8	3.2
	Architecture	16	6.5
	Political Science	20	8.1
	Bio- Chemistry	11	4.4
	Micro- Biology	16	6.5
	Engineering	19	7.7
	Total	248	100
	Arts & Humanities Communicat ion and Media Studies	20	8.1
	Science	125	50.4
	Science	27	10.9
	Social Science	19	7.7
	Environment al Science	15	6.0
	Engineering	19	7.7
	Law	23	9.3
Total	248	100	

Source: Researchers' field work (2023)

Table 1 shows the analysis of the demographic data of respondents such as Gender, Age, Level, department and faculty. According to the table above (50.8%, 11.7%, 25.0% and 12.5%) respondents were within the age range of 12-15 years, 16-18 years, and 19-21 years and 22-25

years respectively took part in the study. Furthermore, the table above shows that the female respondents that took part in the study totaled 130 (52.4), while 118(47.6%) male respondents participated in the study.

The study also shows the level of the respondents that participated in the study as 121 (48.8%) 100 level student took part while 92 (37.1%) of the respondents of the study are in the 200 level / second year of their studies, and 23 (9.3%) of the respondents that participated in the study are in the 300 level / mid years of their studies; 10 (4.0%) of the respondents that participated in the study are also in the 400 or 500 levels / fourth year or final year of their studies. The findings therefore revealed that majority of the respondents that participated in the studies are 100 level students from the randomly sampled six (6) private universities in the South-Western part of Nigeria.

Meanwhile, the study also shows the different Faculties of the respondents that participated in the study. 8.1%, 50.4%, 10.9%, 7.7%, 6.0%, 7.7% and 9.3% of the respondents are from the Faculties of Arts and Humanities, Communication and Media Studies, Sciences, Social Science, Environmental Science, Engineering and Law respectively.

Analysis Based on Research Questions of

the Study

Research Question One: What are the social media? On this question, six (6) questionnaire items were raised in tables 2 to 10 below:

Table 2: Perception of Students on the Usage of Social Media

Do you use social media?	Frequenc y	Perc ent
Yes	136	54.8 %
No	112	45.2 %
Total	248	100 %
Missing Data	52	0%
Total	300	100 %

Source: Researchers' field work (2023)

In Table 2 above, result indicated that 54.8% of the respondents which also account for the majority of the populace in the study; subscribed and do use social media as a universal tool for communication. While 45.2% of the respondents do not use social media. This result thus revealed that majority of the student population use social media.

Table 3: Respondents' Perception of Social

Media

How often do you use social media platforms?	Frequency	Percent
Often	128	51.6%
Not often	31	12.5%
Rarely	60	24.2%
Not all	29	11.7%
Total	248	100%
Missing Data	52	0%
Total	300	100%

Source: Researchers' field work (2023)

In Table 3 above, result indicated that 51.6% of the respondents which also account for the majority of the populace in the study, subscribed to regular use of social media as a universal tool for communication; while 12.5% of the respondents claimed not using social media often. 24.2% of the respondents rarely use social media while 11.7% do not use social media. This result thus revealed that majority of the student population use social media regularly.

Table 4: Assessment of Students' Choice of Social Media

Which of the social media do you use often?	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	110	44.4%
Twitter	31	12.5%
WhatsApp	54	21.8%
Snapchat	22	8.9%
Instagram	31	12.5%
Total	248	100%
Missing Data	52	0%
Total	300	100%

Source: Researchers' field work (2023)

Table 4 above revealed that 44.4% of the respondents prefer Facebook, which account for the majority of the populace in the study; followed by 21.8% that often use WhatsApp. Addicted users of Twitter and Instagram recorded 12.5% respectively, while 8.9% of the respondents were found to be lovers of

Snapchat. This imply that students are used to Facebook (for chatting and fun catching – see table 4 above) than WhatsApp that has more potentials for academic engagement. It further showed that the use of social media is a major factor that indirectly / unconsciously influencing students' poor attendance at lectures.

Table 5: Respondents' Perception of Social Media

How will you rate the use of social media among students in private institutions?	Frequenc y	Perc ent
Excellent	125	50.4 %
Good	31	12.5 %
Average	63	25.4 %
Poor	29	11.7 %
Total	248	100 %
Missing Data	52	0%
Total	300	100 %

Source: Researchers' field work (2023)

Table 5 result indicated that 50.4% of the respondents which also account for the majority of the populace in the study; subscribed to high rate of social media usage among undergraduate students of private institution, 12.5% rated its usage as good, 25.4% considered it average while 11.7% rated it poor. This result thus revealed that majority of the student population are well versed in the use of social media.

Table 6: Respondents' Perception of Social Media

The major reason I use social media site(s) is	Frequenc y	Perc ent
Chatting	111	51.6 %
Academic	70	12.5 %
Online Business	21	24.2 %
Online Banking	18	11.7 %
Games	12	100 %
Others	16	0%
Total	248	100 %
Missing Data	52	0%
Total	300	100 %

%

Source: Researchers' field work (2023)

Table 6 above indicated 44.8% of the respondent which account for the majority of the populace in the study used social media for chatting, while only 28.2% used it for academic engagements. 15.8% of the respondents used social media for business purposes, while 6.5% used it for recreational activities and other purposes. This strongly showed that students used social media for social engagements more than for academic pursuit. This calls for concern.

Table 7: Respondents' Perception of Social Media

Are you worried about the potential abuse of social media among youth / students of nowadays?	Frequenc y	Perc ent
Often	130	52.4 %
Not often	76	30.6 %
Rarely	23	9.3 %
Not all	19	
Total	248	7.7 %

		100 %
Missing Data	52	0%
Total	300	100 %

Source: Researchers' field work (2023)

In the Table 7 above, result indicated that 52.4% of the respondents which also account for the majority of the populace in the study; expressed alarming concern on the negative use of social media among students / youth. 30.6% of the respondents occasionally feel concern about the menace. While 9.3% of the respondents rarely feel concern; 7.7% registered no concern for the presence of menace. This result thus revealed that majority of the respondents condemned the menace.

Research Question Two: What are the effects of social media on students' attitude to lectures in private universities? To answer this question, two (2) questionnaire items were presented and structured in tables 11 to 12.

Table 8: Perception of respondents' on the influence of social media on Attendance at Lectures.

How often do you	Frequenc	Perc
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attend lectures?	y	ent
Often	129	52.0%
Very often	75	30.2%
		10.1%
Rarely	25	7.7%
Not all	19	7.7%
Total	248	100%
Missing Data	52	0%
Total	300	100%

Source: Researchers' field work (2023)

In Table 8 above, result indicated that 52.0% of the respondents which also account for the majority of the populace in the study; subscribed and regularly do attend lectures, while 30.2% were very regular at lectures. 10.1% of the respondents hardly attend lectures, and 7.7% of them do not attend lectures. This result thus revealed that majority of the student population do attend lectures regularly.

Table 9: Perception of respondents' on the influence of social media on Attendance at Lectures.

Lectures are best received via social media than in face-to-face classroom?	Frequenc y	Perc ent
Agree	135	54.4%
Strongly Agree	73	29.4%
		8.9%
Disagree	22	7.3%
Strongly Disagree	18	7.3%
Total	248	100%
Missing Data	52	0%
Total	300	100%

Source: Researchers' field work (2023)

Table 9 above indicated that 54.4% of the respondents which account for the majority of the populace in the study agreed that lectures are best received via social media (i.e. online) than face-to-face / physical classroom, 29.4% of the of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement; while 8.9% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, but 7.3% of the respondent strongly disagreed with the statement. This showed that students preferred

online lecture than that of physical (i.e. face-to-face) classroom.

Research Question Three: Does social media usage affect students' attitude to lectures in private universities? To answer this question, eight (8) questionnaire items were presented and structured in table 10.

Table 10: Perception of respondents' on the influence of social media on Attendance at Lectures.

- **Downloaded online materials on course offered are more profitable than lecture / notes given.**
- **Computers can be used to provide more interactive activities for students than in the physical.**
- **Online materials are up-to-date and adequate for learning than lectures notes.**
- **Sourcing for information / knowledge via social media is better than printed materials like textbook.**
- **Social media Apps improve my grades and academic performance.**
- **Social media reduces distraction in learning.**
- **Social media aids learning in school better than physical classroom lectures.**

- **Skills acquired via social media is enough to prepare students and their subscribers for future careers.**

Questionnaire items 13-19, as listed above.	Frequency	Percent
Agree	127	51.2%
Strongly Agree	75	30.2%
Disagree	23	9.3%
Strongly Disagree	23	9.3%
Total	248	100%
Missing Data	52	0%
Total	300	100%

Source: Researchers' field work (2023)

Table 10 above also revealed that 51.2% of the respondents which account for the majority of the populace in the study, agreed with the statements with bullet. 30.2 % of them strongly agreed with the statement; while 9.3% of the respondents respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. This implies that many of the students do not rely on notes and

course materials given during lectures, but depend much on those downloaded online for knowledge and skill acquisitions. This result confirmed previous research output “students prefer online learning than face-to-face classroom”. This finding revealed factors that contributed to students’ poor attendance at physical classroom lectures.

Research Question Four: What are the measures that will improve class attendance at lectures among students of private universities in Nigeria? To answer this question, one (1) questionnaire item was presented and structured in table 11.

Table 11: Perception of respondents’ on the influence of social media on Attendance at Lectures.

Do you see any prospect in the use of social media for academic advancement?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	109	44.0%
No	139	56.0%
Total	248	100%
Missing Data	52	0%

Total	300	100%
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Source: Researchers’ field work (2023)

In Table 11 above, result indicated that 56.0% of the respondents which also account for the majority of the populace in the study; did not see prospect in the use of social media for advancement of academic work in Nigeria; while 44.0% of the respondents were optimistic of the efficacy of technology for academic advancement in the nearest future. This result thus revealed that majority of the student population are lagging behind in the use of social media, and not yet experience the efficacy / reap the benefits of digital technology of nowadays.

6. Implications for instructional media design / production and communication, guidance and counselling in schools at this digital age.

Findings from the research revealed low percentage of usage and users of digital technology among students of private universities in the South-Western part of Nigeria. This throws a challenge to the lecturers, designers and producers of digital devices, ICT instructors, and especially instructional media producers. Stakeholders should rise up to direct, redirect and situate the wave of technology that is redefining the world of work for better,

Nigeria and Africa should not be exempted. It happened during COVID-19 global infection lockdown, which made students to learn from home. Thus, practitioners of educational media should widely and vigorously advocate for the inevitable use of ever advancing digital technology in today's world. Interactive instructional media with latest hifi (i.e high definition) should be produced, available and affordable for users, especially students (crèche to tertiary). Digital counselling should be enthroned in tertiary institutions where students and other users / clients will equally be counseled of the inevitable use of technology for service delivery and daily living.

7. Conclusion

The study therefore concluded that the irresistible usage of social media among students (youth) need to be encouraged among students of private institutions, in order to enhance knowledge and skills acquisitions necessary for today's challenging (i.e. highly demanding for digital technology) world of work.

8. Recommendations

The study recommended that lecturers should integrate the use of social media in classroom

teaching and learning processes, and introduce blended learning approach to instructional delivery. Parents should monitor their wards' use of cellphone; and government should provide enabling environment (especially strong and wider internet broadband) for ICT in schools. Educational technologists / Instructional media designers and producers in Nigeria, should upgrade and improve quality of their work to meet up with the present world standard. School counsellors in conjunction with ICT specialists, should as a matter of utmost importance engage students on the use of social media for academic work.

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