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THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO IMPROVE LEARNING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OYE-EKITI

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Abstract: The study investigated the use of Social media to improve learning skills among students: Case of Federal University Oye-Ekiti. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive research design and utilized a quantitative approach. The study population consisted of all the students from Federal University Oye-Ekiti. A purposive sampling technique was used to sample 63 educational foundation students from 400 level students enrolled for the 2021/2022 Academic Session. The data collection tool was a questionnaire titled "Social Media Platform Questionnaire for Improving Learning Skills (SMPQ)". Data collected was analyzed with the aid of mean and standard deviation and revealed that Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, blogs, WhatsApp, MySpace, and Google Plus are social media platforms used to improve learning skills among students. It was also revealed that many Federal University Oye-Ekiti students use social media to improve their learning skills to a greater extent. Elements such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, blogs, WhatsApp, MySpace, and Google Plus are widely used. It was recommended among other things that School authorities should prioritize educating students on the appropriate use of social media sites to prevent abuse.

Keywords: Use; Social media; Improve; Learning skills; University

1 INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of people's lives around the world in recent times. It's a massive revolution that has changed the lives of many students, especially the way they socialize and relate, and its use has skyrocketed in recent years [1]. The use of these media may have improved the learning skills of students, especially those at various universities, enabling them to be better informed and enlightened, to understand situations, to evaluate and use learning effectively, and to keep up with developments in the world. This shows the vitality of social media in our academic home and the university.

Universities are colleges and research institutions that award degrees in various subjects. It offers both undergraduate and postgraduate education [1]. A university is a place where advanced and in-depth study and research take place and degrees are awarded upon completion of a program, also known as post-secondary education. Here, the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students acquire during secondary education are enhanced through their conscious efforts. Here students develop creative thinking skills and prepare to become independent thinkers who can make their own decisions [2]. Alemu defines a university as an institution of higher education with advanced intellectual development in various disciplines and disciplines[3]. This is a university or place that has the authority to provide teaching and research facilities and to award undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

The importance of a university education cannot be overemphasized because it is an important driving force in the country's construction and development [3]. This is achieved by providing students with professional, business, and technical skills that enable them to tackle key sectors of the country's economy, one of the goals of the National Education Policy [4]. The objectives of establishing university education in Nigeria under the National Education Policy are to contribute to national development through quality workforce education, to provide accessible, affordable, and quality learning opportunities that meet the needs and interests of all Nigerians, to increase the production of a skilled workforce linked to the labour market, and to encourage and support science, entrepreneurship and community development. College students could use social media as an endless source of learning. The tendency to use social media among university students seems to be increasing day by day, and many of them rely on social media for interaction and communication [5]. Students, especially university students, have many social media users as they bring many benefits to their studies. The above claims show that students cannot live without social media.

Social media has evolved into a category of online discourse where people create, bookmark, share, and connect with astonishing speed. It refers to the means of interaction between people creating, sharing, and exchanging learning and ideas within a virtual community or network. Boateng and Amankwaa defined social media as applications that enable conversations and interactions between users[6]. It is an online space that people use to connect, share, communicate, build, and nurture others for a variety of purposes. Social media are online platforms that allow people to build social networks and relationships with other people who share similar personal or professional interests, activities, backgrounds, and real-world connections. Social media is therefore the interaction between individuals who create and share learning and ideas within their networks [3]. However, social media relies on many electronic devices like tablets, iPads, laptops, and Internet-based technologies for connecting people. Thus, social media can be described as

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technologies that facilitate social interaction, make collaboration possible, and enable deliberation among people at the global level.

According to Boyed and Ellison[7], social media is an Internet-based service that allows individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. According to Ali, Iqbal, and Iqbal[8], social media is the collection of applications such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and YouTube, among others, that link people together as they share learning through social networking. As indicated by Junco, Heibergert and Loken [9], social media is referred to as a collection of Internet websites, services, and practices that support collaboration, community building, participation, and sharing. From the above, it can be deduced that social media is the platform that gives individuals the opportunity to interact, using two-way communication, such that it allows anyone who has an online account to share their opinions with other social media users.

Social media has become one of the prominent communication tools, particularly in the school community. Talaue, Alsaad, AlRushaidan, and AlHagail emphasized that social media platforms facilitate access to learning and educational materials[10]. Against this background, many students and teachers are using social media as a teaching and learning tool. Additionally, academic institutions are increasingly using social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn to connect with current and potential students and provide educational content [11]. Social media platforms, therefore, enable students, teachers, and communities to engage and interact in educational and related activities [12]. With this in mind, many universities now maintain profiles and groups on social networking sites such as Facebook where students and faculty can interact, share resources, and express ideas. It seems that the use of social media is increasing among students. Facilitate virtual communities and virtual learning environments among users [12]. Students interact freely with community members in virtual communities. They can share learning and study experiences, research projects, and job opportunities which enhance their learning skills.

Learning can be defined as a relatively permanent change in behaviour resulting from reinforcement practice. According to Shaibu et al [13], learning can be defined as the change in behaviour that occurs at the end of the teacher-student interaction in the classroom. In other words, learning is the experience gained from interactions. As Daugherty said[14], learning is the transformation of an individual through some form of experience. This is sometimes referred to as the desired change in human behaviour. Therefore, learning is a change of behaviour. It is a process that involves changes in perception and behaviour.

According to Farrant[15], learning is the process by which we acquire and maintain attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills, and abilities that cannot be attributed to inherited behavioural patterns or physical development. From the above definitions, it can be seen that learning includes the acquisition of desired knowledge, habits, skills, attitudes, and behavioural patterns through some form of experience or learning. It should be emphasized here that the concept of change is inherent in the concept of learning. If there is a behaviour change, it means that learning is taking place or has already taken place. The two main characteristics inherent in the human learning process are the positive and constant nature of behavioural changes. Learning is an active process in the sense that learners must participate in learning activities. This means that learning is a continuous exercise.

Learning is continuous in the sense that it takes place from cradle to death – before school, in school, out of school, and throughout life. Learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour or performance resulting from practice, exposure, and experience; therefore, when a person's performance on a task changes as a result of practice, learning has already occurred in that person. We can practice reading, writing, singing, playing tennis, or driving [16]. The fact that learning has taken place can only be inferred from the individual's performance on a particular task. So, performance as a measure of learning can be subjectively and objectively observed while we cannot observe learning, we can conveniently observe changes in performance confirming that learning is directly related to a change in behaviour as measured by performance and at the same time, learning is related to conditions of practice or experience and this position caters to subtle changes in performance due to learning factors such as maturity, medication status, and fatigue. The use of social media for improving students' learning skills at Federal University Oye-Ekiti remains the focal point of this study.

According to Mohammed [17], exploitation is the process or act of using or benefiting from resources or services to accomplish a task or goal. Students must be able to explore or use the digital environment and social media to excel in learning and research and advance science. Coonan and Jane noted that student use of media can take the form of communicating or posting learning and materials via email[18], the World Wide Web, and other social media platforms. According to Alemu[3], social media use is the ability to use social media sites and platforms effectively and independently for your benefit. The use of social media in learning retrieval helps us to become more sophisticated, sophisticated, and confident researchers and lays the foundation for independent lifelong learning, thereby improving the learning skills of users (students) in the context of this research.

A bachelor is someone who studies at a university or other college. A student is a person who is formally engaged in learning especially those in higher institutions such as schools and universities. We have two types of students, undergraduate and graduate. "Student" refers specifically to a student seeking a first degree, a National Diploma (ND), or a National Education Certificate (NCE). According to Mole[19], an undergraduate is an undergraduate or professional student pursuing a bachelor's degree. The term "faculty" refers to a bachelor's degree. In practice, however, the importance of social media cannot be ignored if students are to fulfil their true purpose in the university environment. Social media offers many opportunities for students to virtually connect with other people, including family, friends/colleagues, teachers, partners, and even strangers.

Students have countless opportunities to engage with social media, which improves their learning skills. It allows them to virtually engage with the larger world around them. Students use social media in different ways based on their interests, community, friends, and family. The list of social media platforms used by students is constantly growing and changing. Some of the most popular platforms used by students today include Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Google Plus, and more. Social media is one of the most important sources of learning that keeps students up to date and provides easy access to a global online knowledge base. Students can use social media as an endless source of learning. Academics agree that the positive effects of social media on students seem to outweigh the negative effects [20]. In today's society, where education is the foundation of economic development, the importance of universities cannot be ignored when using social media.

In terms of research areas, preliminary observations revealed that Federal University Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE) students spend a lot of time on social media for various purposes, such as playing games, chatting with family and friends, and reading news from around the world. No matter how much time you invest in these activities, your efforts are jeopardized by a lack of knowledge on how to get the most out of your social media platform. Instead of using these media to improve learning skills, which are most important to their academic work, students are now using these media for irrelevant learning. Misuse of these websites denies students access to much academically relevant learning and undermines learning skills. Based on this premise, researchers aim to assess the use of social media to improve learning skills among students at Federal University Oye-Ekiti.

The use of social media in education generally and in universities, in particular, provides students with the ability to get more useful learning and connect with learning groups and other educational systems that make education convenient. Social network tools afford students and universities multiple opportunities to improve learning methods. Despite the benefits of social media on student learning and achievement concerning knowledge sharing, a study by Rithika and Sara underscores that even when social media is used for an educational purpose[21]; students incorporate the technology into their lives in a way that they use it to engage in irrelevant activities. Undergraduate students have diverted social media usage towards non-educational, unethical, and inappropriate actions and behaviours. It appears that some students, instead of taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by social media for learning purposes, have shifted their attention to using it for other reasons which have greatly affected their level of acquisition of learning skills which has enabled them to manipulate all kind of learning to their taste and for their academic enhancement and development [3]. There is, therefore, a need for undergraduates to use social media for enhanced learning skills among undergraduate students. Therefore, given this situation, this study investigated the use of social media to improve learning skills among students at Federal University Oye-Ekiti.

2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to assess the use of social media to improve learning skills among students: a case of Federal University Oye-Ekiti Specifically, the study:

i.identified the social media platforms used for improving their learning skills among undergraduate students of Federal University Oye-Ekiti.

ii.investigated the extent of use of social media by undergraduate students for improving their learning skills in Federal University Oye-Ekiti.

3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:.

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

i. What are the social media platforms used for improving learning skills among undergraduate students of Federal University Oye-Ekiti?

ii.To what extent do undergraduate students use the social media for improving learning skills in Federal University Oye-Ekiti?

4 METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study was a descriptive survey. This design is ideal because the problem under investigation is descriptive. The population under study consists of all the students at Federal University Oye-Ekiti. The choice of this population was informed by their poor exposure to the use of social media sites by their teachers teaching them in recent times.

The purposive and simple random sampling techniques were employed for sample selection for the study. Faculty of Education Students from Federal University Oye-Ekiti were purposively selected, because, the researcher had easy access to the respondents within the time frame for the study since the faculty is within the school. More so, the researcher was familiar with the students of the area as well as the departments therein, from which the sample size was determined based on the simplified formula proposed by Creswell [22]. Data were collected from 63 educational foundation students across the five departments in the Faculty of Education by using convenience techniques based on the availability and willingness to answer the questions.

The data collection tool is a questionnaire called "Social Media Platform Questionnaire for Improving Learning Skills (SMPQ)". SMPQ consists of two parts and allows you to get answers from your respondents. Section "A" asked for the

demographic characteristics of the respondents, while section "B" was further divided into research questions, each representing a research question. Cluster 1 has 9 elements and Cluster 2 also has 9 elements.

The SMPSQ was distributed to students in the study area by the researchers and research assistants to facilitate the distribution and collection of the questionnaire. The completed questionnaire was picked up by the researcher the next day. In analyzing the collected data, the researchers used frequency and simple percentages of demographic characteristics of the respondents. A four-point rating scale was used for responses and their associated values such as Frequently Used (FU) = 4, Rarely Used (RU) = 3, Occasionally Used (OU) = 2, and Never Used (NU) = 1. Responses were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Rejection and acceptance criteria for the analysis were set at 2.50.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Mean Responses on the Social Media Platforms Used for Improving Learning Skills Among Undergraduate Students

S/N	ITEMS	FU	OU	RU	NU	Total	X	Decision
1	Facebook	24	19	9	11	63	2.88	Agreed
		96	57	18	11	182		-
2	YouTube	26	21	10	6	63	3.06	Agreed
		104	63	20	6	193		-
3	Instagram	22	19	11	11	63	2.82	Agreed
	-	88	57	22	11	178		-
4	LinkedIn	4	3	25	31	63	1.68	Disagreed
		16	9	50	31	106		
5	Blogs	18	26	8	11	63	2.80	Agreed
	-	72	78	16	11	177		-
6	WhatsApp	22	20	7	14	63	2.79	Agreed
	**	88	60	14	14	176		-
7	Twitter	2	1	39	21	63	1.74	Disagreed
		8	3	78	21	110		
8	MySpace	21	21	12	9	63	2.85	Agreed
		84	63	24	9	180		-
9	Google Plus	23	18	13	9	63	2.87	Agreed
	2	92	54	26	9	181		č

Keys: FU= Frequently Used, **OU**= Occasionally Used, **RU**= Rarely Used, **NE**= Never Used N_1 = 63 Respondents

Table 1 shows the social media platforms used to improve the learning skills of students at Federal University Oye-Ekiti. Scores were 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 9, with mean ratings of 2.88, 3.06, 2.82, 2.80, 2.79, 2.85, and 2.87 above 2.50, indicating that respondents agreed to look at which social media platforms are being used to improve student's learning skills in their areas of study. However, points 4 and 7 have lower rates of 1.68 and 1.74, well below the cutoff of 2.50. This indicates that respondents do not agree on these points.

Table 2 Mean Responses on the Extent Undergraduate Students Use the Social Media for Improving Learning Skills

S/N	ITEMS	GE	%	LE	%	Total	Decision
10	Facebook	58	92.06	5	7.94	63	Great Extent
11	YouTube	55	87.30	8	12.69	63	Great Extent
12	Instagram	46	73.01	17	26.98	63	Great Extent
13	LinkedIn	8	12.69	55	87.30	63	Less Extent
14	Blogs	59	93.65	4	6.34	63	Great Extent
15	WhatsApp	58	92.06	5	7.98	63	Great Extent
16	Twitter	5	7.93	58	92.06	63	Less Extent
17	MySpace	49	77.77	14	22.22	63	Great Extent
18	Google Plus	50	79.36	13	2063	63	Great Extent

Keys = **GE**; Great Extent, **LE**; Less Extent,

Respondents were asked to describe the extent to which undergraduates use social media to improve learning skills at Federal University Oye-Ekiti. According to this table, Facebook 92.06%, YouTube 87.30%, Instagram 73.01%, Blogs 93.65%, WhatsApp 92.06%, MySpace 77.77%, and Google Plus 79.36 are the most used. However, LinkedIn has a lower usage rate of 12.69% and Twitter 7.93%.

6 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The study found that the social media platforms used to improve learning skills among Federal University Oye-Ekiti students are Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, blogs, WhatsApp, MySpace, and Google Plus. This is consistent with Baran's findings that social media platforms such as YouTube[23], Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, MySpace, Google Plus, and blogs are prevalent and often used to improve learning skills among students. This result is similar to Whiting and Williams [24], who cited Facebook as the most popular social media platform for improving learning skills. Whiting and Williams reported that learning seekers around the world read her Facebook messages and posts about events and current affairs in their field[24]. Junco, Heiberger, and Loken found Facebook and other media as a way to engage students in learning[9]. It was corroborated by Rouse that Facebook is a popular and free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles[25], upload photos and videos, send messages, and keep in touch with friends, family, and colleagues. The author added that through their Facebook page/account, librarians can draw users' attention to useful hidden treasures and further stated that among the social networking sites, Facebook appears to emerge as a winner predominantly because of its large number of members. Gunelius found out that Blogs in universities are used to communicate [26], as instructional resources, as collaborative tools, and as showcases for student projects and adds that the Blog provides a fast, efficient means of communication, posts class announcements for parents or provide schedule reminders for students and enhanced instructional resources, in which teachers can post tips, explanations, or samples to help students learn.

Research finding also shows how much Federal University Oye-Ekiti students use social media to improve their learning skills to a greater extent. Elements such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, blogs, WhatsApp, MySpace, and Google Plus are widely used. This finding is consistent with those of Hay[27], who conducted a similar study to determine the extent to which students use social media to improve learning skills. He found himself using Instagram, Facebook, blogs, WhatsApp, MySpace, and YouTube extensively. This finding is consistent with Krasnova, Veltri, Eling &Buxmann[28], who argued that the advent of social media has brought about significant changes in lifestyle and communication practices in society. The researchers further said that it is clear that not only Twitter but also social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp are gaining popularity and permeating the lives of people around the world. In particular, social networks (SNSs) have become a popular platform for user interaction [29]. Hashim, Al-Sharqi, and Kutbi suggested that the presence of social media among more than 1.5 billion social media users worldwide motivates researchers to investigate why students use this kind of technology in their daily lives[30]. This is because addiction continues to rise worldwide, while young people in particular are the largest consumers of social media.

7 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, blogs, WhatsApp, MySpace, and Google Plus are social media platforms used to improve learning skills among students. It was also concluded that improving students' learning skills and the perceived purposes of using social media to improve learning skills included assignments, assessments, ongoing assessments, and the use of social media for taking notes during class.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. School authorities should prioritize educating students on the appropriate use of social media sites to prevent abuse.
- ii. A skilled workforce should be recruited and strategically placed so that students can use social media appropriately to manage their academic programs.
- iii. Parents should make every effort to purchase Android Smartphone for their children to use at school.
- iv. It is also important to provide alternative energy sources to improve the utilization of social media resources and services.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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