

Chapter 19

Assessment of the Use of Social Media by Students of the National Open University of Nigeria, Abeokuta Study Centre

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ABSTRACT

Social media sites have been recognised as important resources for education. They facilitate effective interaction between teachers and students and promote prompt and frequent interactions among students. Hence, this study was aimed at assessing the use of social media by students of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). To achieve this, the study attempted to determine the extent to which students of NOUN use social media, what the students use social media for, and the challenges and benefits of the use of social media by the students for academic purpose. Selected theories for this study are uses and gratification and diffusion of innovation theories. The study employed survey method of research. The study discovered that all the respondents had access to social media sites. The study also observed that majority of the respondents share academic materials through their social media sites. Some of the identified challenges in accessing social media include weak internet connection, inconsistent power supply, limited financial resources.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper presents an assessment of the uses of social media by students of the National Open University of Nigeria, Abeokuta Study Centre. In spite of the widespread use of social media, little is known about impact on tertiary academic activities. Social media sites although have been recognised as important resources for education. In realisation of the inherent benefits of social media in facilitating social interaction among people of similar interest, social media has been adopted by many (educators, academics and students) as a major medium of the learning platform. It has among other benefits facilitates effective interaction between teachers and students and promotes prompt and frequent interactions among students. Hence, this study was aimed at assessing the use of social media by students of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). To achieve this, the study attempted to determine the extent to which students of National Open University of Nigeria use social media; what the students of National Open University of Nigeria use social media for; and the challenges and benefits of the use of social media by the students of National Open University of Nigeria for academic purpose. To advance this, the study looked at different theoretical frameworks that best explain what media users do with media and how new ideas or technology spread. Selected theories for this study are uses and gratification, technological determinism and diffusion of innovation theories. The study employed survey method of research and deployed questionnaires as its research instrument to solicit responses from students of the National Open University of Nigeria, Abeokuta Study Centre. The study discovered that all the respondents had access to social media sites and the extent to which they access social media sites was very high. The study also observed that majority of the respondents share academic materials and views through their social media sites, while some of them confessed that they also engage in some social activities online. Some of the identified challenges in accessing social media by the respondents include weak internet connection, incessant power supply, limited financial resources, limited local academic materials and low information and technology literacy. They listed some of the benefits inherent in the use of social media as opportunity for interactive learning, increased access to online academic materials, and reduction in the cost of acquiring academic materials. The study recommended that further studies be conducted on effect of social media on students' academic performance.

BACKGROUND

Social media is a phrase being tossed around these days, but it can sometimes be difficult to answer the question. If **MYSpace** is a social media site and **MAG.NOLIA** is a social media site, and **WIKIPEDIA** is a social media site, then what is social media?

Social media according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) refers to “group of internet-based applications” that builds on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content. It is a form of electronic communication which facilitates interaction based on certain interests and characteristics. Social media use web-based technologies to transform media monologues into social dialogues. They support the democratisation of knowledge and information and transform people from content consumers to content producers.

It comprises of activities that involve socialising and networking online through words, pictures and videos. Social media is redefining how we relate to each other and how we as individuals relate to the

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