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PROF. A. G. A. S. OLADOSU

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Abstract

Studies had shed some light on why technological products are not used purposely for learning. Reasons cited in literature specifically identified factors such as technology itself and user factors such as users' perception of the technology. While understanding the impact of perception on users' use of technology in the learning context such as social media for learning especially regarding students whose focus is in Arabic. This study investigated Arabic students' perceived usefulness and ease of use of social media for learning in the Universities in Kwara state. Four research questions were answered, and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A quantitative research approach of a survey type was adopted, while the sample size comprised 490 multistage sampled Arabic students from two government-owned Universities in Kwara State. A validated self-developed questionnaire with a reliability value of 0.87 served as the research instrument. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed as the analytical tools in the study. Significantly, the findings revealed that: (i) Arabic students in Universities in Kwara state had positively perceived usefulness towards social media for learning; (ii) perceived ease of use of social media for learning among Arabic students in Universities in Kwara state was positive; (iii) gender differences did not exist in the Arabic students perceived usefulness of social media for learning. This study concluded that social media, being an open platform that provides learning avenues for learners without interruption, creates platforms for Arabic students to learn at their pace and share instructional contents with ease. The study recommended that Arabic instructors and lecturers should shift to the students' context in order to achieve the goals of education.

Keywords: Social Media; Learning; Undergraduate; Perceived Ease of Use; Perceived Usefulness; Perception

Introduction

The justification for the integration of technology as a veritable tool is based on the recognition of the array of vital roles that technology plays in the current century. Evidently, the integration of technology in several human endeavours has potentially altered the social structure and operational mode, and this social alteration has diametrically forced learning institutions to react and change as well. In fact, instructional technologists such as Ogunlade (2015) noted that the society has to be adjusted to meet the challenges of the 21st century, popularly termed the digital age surge. Corroboratively, Abanikannda and Ajani (2019) averred that the development in technology has vastly transformed every sphere of life and permeated all human actions and endeavours. The researchers therefore concluded that the integration of technology has increasingly become the critical determinant of educational success in the 21st century.

Undoubtedly, technology has impacted on the quality and quantity of education, most especially intraditional and distance education as well as research in several spheres. In concrete terms, technology has enhanced classroom instruction through its dynamic, interactive, and engaging content; and also provided real opportunities for individualised instruction (Yusuf & Balogun, 2011). Bates

(2015) posited that education is undergoing a major shift, as brick-and-mortar classrooms are opening up to rich media content. This shift has been influenced largely by greater worldwide access to the Internet, explosion of mobile technology users, and the appreciation of these technologies by younger generation.

Siemens, Gašević and Dawson (2015) asserted that the application of technology to education has gone through three distinct generations of development and now the fourth has emerged; Internet and exhaustive use of mobile technologies. The 21st century had continued to marshal in technological advancement that has changed the nature of communication and socialization. The involvement of the Internet has led to major developments in the world of communication. Agommuoh (2015) claimed that the Internet makes it possible to expand networks and to increase the possibilities of communicating with wider audiences on the globe through the social media.

The interactive aura of the social media confers an unprecedented popularity on it. The coming into being of the social media revolutionized the world of communication and today and people celebrate its impacts in all walks of life including education. Social media are interactive networks of communication in the modern society emerging through the instrumentality of the Internet and other telecommunication gadgets. Amidst web applications in the 21st century, social media has emerged as the fastest growing application. The evolution of the Internet which led to social media usage as the best medium of communication and virtually world's population now visits the social media for communication and connection purposes, especially among the younger generations (Antiri, 2016).

In this technological era, information is no longer left for only a few privileged people who can afford the use of land line telephone in offices and homes. Even the people in the remote areas in Nigeria and elsewhere can access information through the cell phone, available Internet and social media (Kizito, 2016). Kizito (2016), therefore, described social media as web-based services that allow 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 view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

The diverse applications of social media like Wikis, video streaming and applications, and social connections make it the phenomenon of the century. Popular social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram among others record users accounting over billions in 2013 and the number of users is still increasing (Kizito, 2016). Jha and Bhardwaj (2012) asserted that social media exploded as a category of online discourse which enables users to create contents, share them, and bookmark them for future use at a wonderful rate. With these characteristics of social media, the gap that existed in the communication process where people had to rely solely on traditional methods such as letters and phone calls as a mode of getting in touch with friends and relatives was breached.

Today, communication is as easy as walking into a neighbour's residence to deliver a piece of information or vice-versa through the use of social media (Asur & Huberman, 2010). Brown (2010) claimed that the primary driving factors for the use of social media are the progressively ubiquitous access, convenience, functionality, and flexibility that it is characterised with. These factors have made the utilisation of social media very easy and have tremendously improved mankind's life by exposing him to different ways of creating and sharing information. An additional benefit of social media provided on the Internet is that they are frequently free or require marginal investment, thereby eliminating a potential barrier to utilisation (Brown, 2010).

The overwhelming benefits of Internet and social media in learning situations have necessitated teachers and students alike to use them without understanding the fundamentals of integrating and utilising them for classroom instruction (Adedokun-Shittu, Olasehinde-Williams, Obielodan, & Salawu, 2017). Equally, technology utilisation in the 21st century classroom has extended beyond the use of any available technological tool. Such technology should be able to engage learners purposively. The Internet today has played a significant role in engaging learners in achieving academic excellence, particularly, the social media.

In Nigeria, irrespective of age and gender, most students, including Arabic students, now start the day by checking their social media accounts and the time and attention dedicated to its usage is becoming increasingly alarming (Alabi, 2013). In fact, this trend can constitute serious academic problems if left unchecked. The frenzy is gradually tending toward addiction as some students cannot do without accessing their accounts with the social media sites they subscribed to. As observed by Osharie (2015) and Maya (2015), when lectures are going on, students still find time to chat with friends online or respond to notifications at the detriment of their academic pursuit.

In other studies conducted by Ogunlade (2015), McNair and Green, (2016) and Adetunla (2016) had shed some light on why technological products are not used purposely for learning. One of the major reasons primarily identified and attributed as a key factor is the technology itself and users' factors such as users' perception on the technology. In relation to perception towards social media, social media is technology dependent, hence, the prediction of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) becomes imperative. TAM is one of the most profound conceptual model frequently used in studies to explain and predict the use of ICT resources such as social media in education.

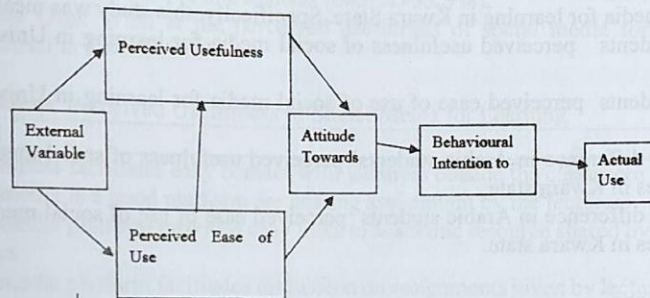


Figure 1: Technology Acceptance Model
Source: Davis, (1989)

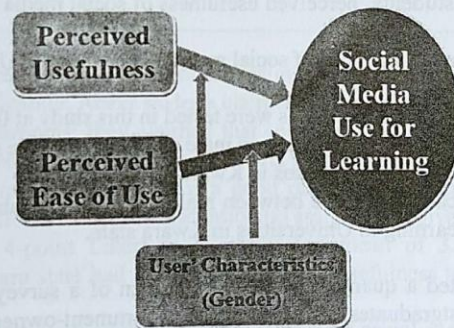


Figure 2: Adapted Model of Technology Acceptance Model
Source: Researchers

Figure 1 above indicates TAM as propounded by Davis (1989). TAM theorized that the acceptability and usage of information system or technological tool is dependent on critical variables such as how user(s) perceived it, either in terms of its ease to use or its usefulness in meeting their goals. TAM claimed that the actual use of ICT is influenced by the user's behavioural intentions, attitude, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of the technology (Davis, 1989). In addition, TAM proposed that external factors (self-efficacy, anxiety, motivation, external control, and a host of other external factors) affect intention and actual use through mediated effects on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.

Perceived Usefulness (PU) refers to the degree to which user believes the target system would enhance his or her job performance, while the Perceived Ease Of Use (PEOU) refers to the degree to which user expects the target system to be free of effort. As regards this, social media will be perceived easy to use by undergraduates if it becomes easy to learn with, and if the interaction with it makes them achieve better grades in their studies (Adetunla, 2016). While understanding the conceptuality of TAM, this study found the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of social media for learning interesting, because it has been argued in literature that difficulty of use can discourage adoption of a useful technological resources, no amount of usefulness can compensate for resources that does not give ease of function (Oyelekan, 2008) this is modelled in Figure 2. While understanding the impact of perception on users' use of technology such as social media for learning, this study therefore premised its investigation on undergraduates' perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of social media for learning in Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine undergraduates' perceived usefulness and ease of use of social media for learning in Kwara State. Specifically, this study was meant to determine:

1. Arabic students' perceived usefulness of social media for learning in Universities in Kwara state;
2. Arabic students' perceived ease of use of social media for learning in Universities in Kwara state;
3. the gender difference in Arabic students' perceived usefulness of social media for learning in Universities in Kwara state;
4. the gender difference in Arabic students' perceived ease of use of social media for learning in Universities in Kwara state.

Research Questions

In this study, the following research questions were answered:

1. What is the Arabic students' perceived usefulness of social media for learning in Universities in Kwara state?
2. What is the perceived ease of use of social media for learning in Universities in Kwara state?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested in this study at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between male and female Arabic students' perceived usefulness of social media for learning in Universities in Kwara state.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between male and female Arabic students' perceived ease of use of social media for learning in Universities in Kwara state.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research design of a survey type, while targeting Arabic (undergraduates and postgraduates) students in the government-owned Universities in Kwara State (University of Ilorin, UNILORIN, and Kwara State University, KWASU). Multistage sampling technique was employed to select the sample size. Namely, proportionate sampling technique was used in selecting the sample per school; UNILORIN; 294, and KWASU; 196, making a total sample of 490. The sample were further selected through a cluster sampling technique in each school.

The instrument for this study included a validated researcher-designed questionnaire with a reliability value 0.87 to gather relevant data for this study. The questionnaire contained three sections (A, B and C); Section A elicited demographic information of respondents; Section B contained items to examine the Arabic students' perceived usefulness of social media for learning; and Section C contained items to determine the perceived ease of use of social media for learning among undergraduate students in Kwara state. Sections Band C were rated on a modified Likert Mode Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), and Disagree (D) with weighted value of

4 to 1 in terms of scoring. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 23.0. Frequency distribution and mean were used to answer the research questions while, *t*-test was used to test all the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Demographic Information

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender

Demographic Data	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	174	35.5
Female	316	64.5
Total	490	100

As indicated in Table 1, the proportion of female Arabic students' that were involved in the study was greater than that of male Arabic students (64.5% > 35.5%).

Research Question One: What is the perceived usefulness of social media for learning among undergraduate students in Kwara state?

Table 2: Arabic Students' Perceived Usefulness of Social Media for Learning

S/N	ITEM	Mean
1.	Social media facilitates easy contact with lecturers outside the classroom	3.72
2.	Social media is a good platform for posting assignment by the lecturers	3.41
3.	Social media platform provides easy links to academic resource shared by the lecturers	3.49
4.	Social media platform facilitates discussion on assignments given by lecturers	3.16
5.	Social media is a good platform for review and editing finished assignment among peers	3.61
	Grand Mean	3.48

Table 2 revealed perceived usefulness of social media for learning among undergraduate students in Kwara state. Significantly, Arabic students claimed that social media facilitates easy contact with lecturers outside the classrooms; they claimed that social media is a good platform for review and editing finished assignments among peers; social media platform provides easy links to academic resources shared by the lecturers; social media is a good platform for posting assignments by the lecturers; and social media platform facilitates discussion on assignments given by lecturers. Based on the benchmark of 2.5 of a 4-point Likert scale, the grand mean of 3.48 > 2.50 indicated that undergraduate students in Kwara state had a positive perceived usefulness towards social media for learning.

Research Question Two: What is the perceived ease of use of social media for learning among undergraduate students in Kwara state?

Table 3: Arabic Students' Perceived Ease of Use of Social Media for Learning

S/N	ITEM	Mean
1.	It is easy to upload instructional pictures and video on social media	3.54
2.	It is easy to collaborate with colleagues on given assignment with social media	3.03
3.	The learning resources downloaded and shared through social media are not complicated to understand	3.21
4.	High computer skill is not needed to learn concepts through social media	3.13
5.	Interaction with social media platform for learning is clear and understandable	2.99
Grand Mean		3.16

Table 3 revealed the Arabic students' perceived ease of use of social media for learning. Significantly, Arabic students claimed that they find it easy to upload instructional pictures and videos on social media; they posited that learning resources downloaded and shared through social media are not complicated to understand; they asserted that with low computer skill, learning concepts through social media can be achieved; they claimed that it is easy to collaborate with colleagues on given assignment with social media; and interaction with social media platform for learning is clear and understandable. Based on the benchmark of 2.5 of a 4-point Likert scale, the grand mean of $3.16 > 2.50$ revealed that the Arabic students' perceived ease of use of social media for learning among undergraduate students in Kwara state was positive.

Hypothesis Testing

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between male and female Arabic students' perceived usefulness of social media for learning in Universities in Kwara state.

Table 4: *t*-test Analysis of Gender Difference in Arabic Students' Perceived Usefulness of Social Media for Learning

Gender	N	X	SD	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Male	174	3.32	.48	488	-.207	.43	Accepted
Female	316	3.35	.49				

From Table 4, it can be deduced that there was no significant difference between male and female Arabic students' perceived usefulness of social media for learning in Kwara state. This is reflected in the findings of the hypotheses tested $df(488)$, $t = -.207$, $p > 0.05$. Thus, the hypothesis which states that "there is no significant difference between male and female Arabic students' perceived usefulness of social media for learning in Universities in Kwara state" is accepted.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significance difference between male and female Arabic students' perceived ease of use of social media for learning in Universities in Kwara state

Table 5: *t*-test Analysis of Gender Difference in Undergraduate students' Perceived Ease of Use of Social media

Gender	N	X	SD	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Male	174	3.27	.48	488	-.201	.32	Accepted
Female	316	3.28	.49				

From Table 5, it can be deduced that there was no significant difference between male and female Arabic students' perceived usefulness of social media for learning in Universities Kwara state. This is reflected in the findings of the hypotheses tested $df(488)$, $t = -.201$, $p > 0.05$. Thus, the hypothesis

which states that "there is no significant difference between male and female Arabic students' perceived ease of use of social media for learning in Universities in Kwara state" is accepted.

Summary of Findings

1. Arabic students in Kwara state had a positive perceived usefulness of social media for learning;
2. The perceived ease of use of social media for learning among Arabic students in Kwara state was positive;
3. Gender differences did not exist in the Arabic students' perceived usefulness of social media for learning; and
4. Both male and female Arabic students had a positive perceived ease of use of social media for learning.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of this study revealed that Arabic students had a positive perceived usefulness and ease of use of social media for learning. This finding corroborated the findings of Ataran and Nami, (2011) who found out that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of social media in aiding learning is influential and majority of undergraduates belief that social media platforms serving as an instructional innovation can offer added value above and beyond existing practices in education and learners are widely adopting it into their learning. Other researchers such as Hennessy and Deane, (2015) equally posited that the new approaches that social media has created had provided avenue for learning to be seen as compatible with existing practices and be perceived as meeting learning needs among students.

Similarly, the findings of this study indicated that gender difference did not exist in the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of social media for learning. This finding is against the outcome of the study by Agbatogun, (2010) who provided that gender disparity is seen in the area of social media usage among users, especially among students. The researcher claimed that the introduction of social media has created a new facet of socio-stereotypes and gender disparities. The conventional and orthodox gender disparities that existed in classrooms subjects are being extrapolated into technology. In the observation of Wajcman (2016), the researcher observed that many feminists believe that western technology embodies patriarchal values. The researcher argued that most female are reluctant to use social media because of the sex-stereotyped definition of technology as an activity appropriate for men.

In conclusion, this study revealed that the importance of social media to learning among Arabic students lies in the idea of using social media as a learning tool and also form as an integral method of communication of learning instruction in educational situations, such as resource-based learning, its transformative power lies in the ease with which such resources, when digitized, can be shared via the Internet. Importantly, there is only one key differentiator between social media and any other communication channel: its ubiquitous and ease of access. Thus, social media is simply a learning platform that provides learning avenues for learners while been able to share, use, and potentially adapt without first requesting permission from the copyright holder, hence, making it open, accessible and easy to utilise among Arabic students.

Based on the findings of this study, the following implications can be drawn. The findings of this study have great implications for the educators and Arabic students. The outcome of this study indicated that the use of social media could be harnessed for learning purpose especially among learners, thereby providing free access to learning resources that would improve students' performance and retention of learning contents. Equally, if Arabic students are encouraged to utilise social media for learning purpose strictly, there would be better achievement of goals. This study also has an implication on the manner at which educators approach instruction, if learning resources made available to undergraduates through proper social media channels, better academic achievement would be achieved, thus, achieving institutional goals would be made easier.

Recommendations:

the following recommendations are made:

1. Lecturers should be encouraged to utilise social media in order to engage Arabic students in an engaging, open and self-paced manner. This is because, one of the primary purposes of social media in learning is to make education public for all citizenry.
2. Social media utilisation should be encouraged among Arabic students. This will provide avenue for learners to learn in a personalised, individualised, and self-paced level, which will in turn translate to better academic performance.

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Note: This study premised its model on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) propounded by Davis (1989). The model theorized that information system or technological tool acceptability and usage is largely dependent on user's perception, either in terms of its ease to use or its usefulness in meeting the purpose of use. Other variables that influence user's actual use of technology are user's behavioural intentions, attitude, external factors (self-efficacy, anxiety, motivation, external control, and a host of other external factors).