



# AWARENESS AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY DUTSIN-MA, KATSINA STATE

By

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** *The study examined awareness and of use of social media applications for learning among undergraduate students of Federal University Dutsin-ma Katsina state, Nigeria. The objectives of the research were to examine the students' awareness level on social media applications for learning, and to ascertain the ease-of-use of social media applications for learning among undergraduate students of the Federal University, Dutsin-ma.*

**Design/Method/Approach:** *Two theories were used and quantitative research method was adopted for the study. The population of the study encompasses all the undergraduate students in Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina state, Nigeria. A close-ended questionnaire was used for data collection. Subsequently, the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (i.e. frequency table, percentages, mean and standard deviation).*

**Findings:** *The study found out that there is little understanding of various gratifications and motivations in the use of social media application for learning among undergraduate students of Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina state.*

**Implication:** *The study noted some challenges such as: inadequate knowledge and skills on using social media applications, lack of awareness of the potentials of social media, lack of access to ICT facilities, and lack of basic search skills, technophobia, and poor power supply, among other challenges.*

**Originality/value:** *The originality of the study lies in its recommendation that among others, the need for the university authority to keep the students informed and enlightened on the potentials of digital education tools for effective learning through selective dissemination of information and orientation.*

**Keywords:** Awareness, social media Applications for learning, undergraduate Students, Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina State.

## Introduction

For the many youth of today, social media applications have become an integral part of their lives. These platforms offer a wide array of functions, ranging from social networking to content sharing, and serve as valuable tools for enhancing educational experiences. Simon (2015) opined that students use social media tools for research projects, as learning resources, and for team work. Part of the reason for its use by students is because social media tools are mostly free applications for public use. A study by Keplan (2016) showed that social media is a global phenomenon that

is used in universities and higher institutions of learning to implement new paradigms for communication, learning and other educational purposes. Smith & Anderson (2018) stated that at the undergraduate level, the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp among others has experienced exponential growth. Federal University Dutsin-ma (FUDMA), Katsina State, Nigeria, is not an exception to this trend as the undergraduate students of the institution, like their global counterparts rely on social media for transmitting information, exchange of ideas

and entertainment (Akentola & Olugbara, 2020). These platforms enable students to engage in collaborative learning, share educational resources and access learning materials conveniently (Junco, 2015).

The use of social media provides students with access to a wide range of useful information such as articles, videos, podcasts, and online opportunities to improve learning methods, communication and collaborative learning, and increase students' engagement with the teaching learning process (Manca, & Ranieri, 2016). In other words, using social media could enhance learning experience, boost academic achievement and sharing of information easily. Based on the aforesaid, this study sets to find out the level of awareness and use of social media applications for learning among undergraduate students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina state.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

The use of social media applications among our youth has experienced exponential growth, especially in recent times across the globe especially because such applications are believed to assist their users in their educational pursuit. In spite of the ubiquity of social media applications to our daily lives, their integration into academic learning activities by undergraduate students' remains underexplored by many undergraduate students in Nigerian universities, including FUDMA, Katsina State. The above statement is evidenced by the pilot study conducted by the researchers, where the results indicated a poor understanding of the potential of social media applications for academic activities among the undergraduate students of FUDMA, Katsina State.

However, existing studies have highlighted the potential of social media applications in fostering collaborative learning, enhancing access to

educational resources, and improving communication between students, there is no empirical evidence on awareness and use of social media applications for learning among undergraduate students of Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina State. This gap in knowledge underscores the need to conduct this study in the study area.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the awareness and use of social media applications for learning among undergraduate students of Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina State. Specifically, the study sought to find out the following objectives:

1. the level of awareness on the use of social media applications for learning among undergraduate students of Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina State.
2. the use of social media applications for learning among undergraduate students of Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina State.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Several scholars such as Hargittai *et. al.* (2018); Hamid *et. al.* (2020); Han *et. al.* (2022) have conducted studies on the use of social media by students for academic activities. A report that was published by the U.S. Higher Education Department states that majority of students in Texas University were aware of the different forms of social media for academic purposes; they use social media for learning and sharing contents with far way colleagues (Murphy, 2017). Similarly, Macheal (2014) conducted a study at the Oxford University, focusing on the use of social media applications by students where the results revealed that most students in Oxford University are aware of the potentials of social media applications for learning and research activities.

A study by Shuban (2017) on the application of social media in teaching and learning among undergraduate students of Farhan College of Engineering India revealed that most undergraduate students of the College are aware of social media applications and also, use them to foster research and learning. Mirela (2014) conducted a research on the students of Faculty of Economics, University of Mortar, Bosnia, and reported that social media is already used for sharing materials and exchange of information by the students of the faculty. Similarly, Hanky (2014) stressed that students in Higher Institutions of learning in Ghana used Facebook, Wiki, YouTube, Linked-In, Blogging, Twitter and Podcasting for daily academic activities.

However, Kumar (2018) reported that majority of undergraduate students in Colleges of Engineering in Sri-lanka are not utilizing social media due to lack of awareness about their impact in learning and research activities. Similarly, a study by Mancus (2015) with focus on awareness and challenges associated with the use of social media applications among undergraduate students of Kambakol University, Gambia highlighted that almost half of the participants are not aware of the handiness of social media in learning and they did not believe that the public is trustworthy. More so, 94% of the respondents in the indicated barriers to social media adoption are fear of trusted sources and uncontrollable nature of social media or lack of privacy control.

Within the Nigerian context, many researches that focus on the applicability of social media and mobile devices in higher education for interaction with colleagues and for effective learning have been conducted by different researchers. For example, at the University of Nigeria (UNN), Nsukka, findings of a study conducted by Akintola (2014) revealed that undergraduate students of the University under-used the applications

in their academic activities. Though, Dino (2015) reported that some social media applications were usually used for learning purposes out of the campus life among students in Nigerian universities. The author highlighted Facebook and YouTube as the most visited sites by students for learning and it is noted that around 2/3 of the students use same media for class sessions. Further, Dino (2015) stressed that the use of social media and mobile devices in higher education is a relatively new phenomenon completely hitherto area of research.

Nonetheless, Simon (2015) suggested that if anyone wishes to integrate social media tools as a learning resource, he/she need to cultivate positive attitude and trust on its potentials. It is unarguable that social media usage trends are growing rapidly all over the world. Although, some problems are hindrances to their adequate use such as power failure, lack of security and privacy, lack of advanced ICT skills, slow speed of the internet, and lack of knowledge on how to use the social media for learning, among others. In this regard, Edward (2017) stated that the potentials of social media for enhancing learning opportunities is substantial; it should be noted that Eurostat data of 2017 showed that 30% of England undergraduate students aged 16 to 22 were not utilizing social media applications for learning activities due to lack of awareness of the extent of their potentials.

## Methodology

The study is guided by quantitative research method using descriptive survey. The population consisted of all the undergraduate students in FUDMA, with a total population of 19,800 students. The major instrument for data collection was questionnaire. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for the data collection and the data collected was analyzed using simple frequency tables and percentage. The sample size of the study is three hundred and seventy-seven (377). The

instrument was subjected to face validity. Two senior lecturers from the department of library and information science and an expert in educational measurement carried out the face validation. The expert and senior lecturers were specifically requested to validate the instrument in terms of the relevance and adequacy of content and clarity of the statements. The experts vetted the items of the instrument in the light of the study's purpose, constructs and hypotheses. This is to ensure that each instrument is capable of collecting complete, precise and

accurate information. The researchers, alongside the research assistants they recruited distributed the questionnaire to three hundred and seventy-seven (377) randomly sampled respondents in the study area. A total of 377 copies of the questionnaire were distributed. Out of this number, only 339 copies were correctly filled and returned by the respondents. This gave a response rate of about 90%. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions raised in the study.

### Result and Discussion

**Table 1: Responses on the awareness of undergraduate students on the use of social media applications for learning in FUDMA**

**Key:** Not aware 1, somewhat aware 2, Neutral 3, aware 4, very aware 5

Awareness of social media applications	Not aware		Somewhat aware		Neutral		Aware		Very aware		Mean	STD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
WhatsApp	23	6.8	35	10.4	33	9.8	185	54.7	62	18.3	3.67	1.09
Facebook	39	11.5	49	14.5	27	8.0	98	29.0	125	37.0	3.65	1.39
Instagram	66	19.5	66	19.5	67	19.8	66	19.5	73	21.6	3.04	1.42
Twitter	80	23.7	105	31.1	66	19.5	47	13.9	40	11.8	2.95	1.30
Linked In	42	12.4	101	29.9	27	8.0	70	20.7	98	29.0	3.23	1.45
TikTok	81	24.0	131	38.8	41	12.1	52	15.4	33	9.8	2.48	1.27
Snap chart	133	39.3	74	29.1	66	19.5	39	12.5	26	7.7	2.26	1.29
Glogster	153	45.3	87	25.7	27	8.0	48	14.2	23	6.8	2.11	1.30
Blog	216	63.9	72	21.3	16	4.7	18	5.3	16	4.7	1.65	1.10
Badoo	155	45.9	77	22.8	15	4.4	15	4.4	14	4.1	1.98	1.11
Skype	120	35.5	96	28.4	52	15.4	45	13.3	25	7.4	2.28	1.27
OoVoo	205	60.7	51	15.1	34	10.1	16	4.7	32	9.5	1.87	1.31

Table 1 above indicates the responses by undergraduate students on the use of social media applications for learning in FUDMA. Responses from the table shows that 73% of the respondents are aware (185; 54.7%) and 62; (18.3%) are very aware of WhatsApp as a tool for learning. This is reflected in a mean score of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 1.09.

And only 17.2% of the respondents (23; 6.8%) are not aware and (35; 10.4%) are somewhat aware; while 33 (9.8%) respondents remained neutral. Facebook was the next listed item that the respondents were asked. This opinion was indicated by overall 66% of the respondents who were aware (98; 29.0%) and are very aware (125; 37.0%) of

the potential of Facebook to learning. This is reflected in a mean score of 3.65 and a standard deviation of 1.39. Also the data revealed that 39 (11.5%) of the respondents were not aware of Instagram and 49 (14.5%) were somewhat aware; while 27 (8.0%) of the respondents remained neutral. Next was awareness of Instagram. The responses in the table showed that overall 39.6% of the respondents were not aware (66; 19.5%) and are somewhat aware (66; 19.5%) that Instagram was used for learning among undergraduate students. This is reflected in a mean score of 3.04 and a standard deviation of 1.42. Also 66 (19.5%) were aware and 73 (21.6%) were very aware of Instagram as a tool for learning. Only 67 (19.8%) of the respondents remained neutral.

Further, Twitter was next in the hierarchy. The responses from the table show that only 25.7% in total of the respondents were aware (47; 13.9%) and very aware (40; 11.8%) of Twitter as a tool for learning in FUDMA. This is reflected in a mean score of 2.95 and a standard deviation of 1.30. At least, 54.8% of the respondents (80; 23.7%) are not aware and are (105; 31.1%) somewhat aware, while 66 (19.5%) respondents remained neutral. The Table also reveal that 49.7% in total of the respondents are aware (70; 20.7%) and very aware (98; 29.0%) of Linked In for learning in FUDMA. This is reflected in a mean score of 3.23 and a standard deviation of .145. Only 42.3% of the respondents (42; 12.4%) not aware and (101; 29.9%) are somewhat aware, while 27 (8.0%) respondents remained neutral.

Moreover, responses regarding Tiktok indicated that 81 (24.0%) of respondents are not aware that Tiktok can be used for academic activity with 131 (38.8%) who were somewhat aware of Tiktok as a tool for learning. Only 52 (15.4%) of the respondents are aware and very aware 33 (9.8%) of TikTok, while 41 (12.1%) remained neutral.

A mean score of 2.48 and a standard deviation of 1.27 were recorded. Likewise, for awareness of Snapchat, the responses revealed that 133 (39.3%) of the respondents were not aware of the snap-chart and (74; 29.1%) of the respondents were somewhat aware. It is only 20.2% of the respondents that were aware (39; 12.5) and very aware (26; 7.7%) of Snapchat, while 66 (19.5%) remain neutral.

Apparently, a mean score of 2.26 and a standard deviation of 1.29 shows that undergraduate students of FUDMA are not aware of Snapchat is as a social media application for learning. Also is the awareness of Glogster, the responses from Table 1 showed that 153 (45.3%) of the respondents were not aware and 87 (25.7%) were somewhat aware of Glogster. Based on the expressed opinion from the Table, it revealed that only 21% of the respondents are aware (48; 14.2%) and very aware (23; 6.8%) of the Glogster, while 27 (8.0%) remained neutral. The result was obtained in a mean score of 2.11 and a standard deviation of 1.30. This clearly reveals that majority of the undergraduate students of FUDMA are not aware that Glogster can be used for learning.

Likewise, on the extent of awareness about Skype as a tool for learning, responses from Table 1 shows that 120 (35.5%) of the respondents are not aware and 96 (28.4%) were somewhat aware of Skype's potential as a learning tool. Based on the expressed opinion from the Table, it is revealed that only 20.7% of the respondents are aware (45; 13.3%) and very aware (25; 7.4%) of Skype while 52 (15.4%) remained neutral. The result is reflected in a mean score of 2.28 and a standard deviation of 1.27. Similarly, results on the awareness of Oovoo by the undergraduate students of the university under study shows that 205 (60.7%) are not aware and 51 (15.1%) somewhat aware of Oovoo for learning. This is reflected in a

mean score of 1.87 and a standard deviation of 1.31. Also in the total responses only 14.2% were aware (16; 4.7%) and very aware (32; 9.5%) of Oovoo for learning among the undergraduate students. Only 34(10.1%) respondents remained neutral.

Overall, data on Table 1 above indicate that the undergraduate students of FUDMA are mainly aware of WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Linked-In as social media applications for learning; and are somewhat aware of other social media applications like Tiktok, Twitter, Blogs, Snapchat, Tumblr, Glosters, OoVoo, and Skype.

**Table 2: Responses of Undergraduate Students about the Use of Social Media Applications for Learning**

SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, STD= Standard Deviation (N/338)

Responses	SA		A		UD		SD		D		Mea	STD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	n	
<b>Social media are easily used to facilitate learning process among most of the undergraduate students of FUDMA for better academic achievement</b>	106	31.4	115	34.0	13	3.8	45	13.3	59	17.5	2.44	1.44
<b>Social media are easily used among undergraduate students for accessing scholarly information for learning rather than other information tools</b>	29	8.6	35	10.4	27	8.0	39	11.5	208	61.5	3.5	1.09
<b>Social media allow students of FUDMA to easily create, edit and share course contents in textual, video or audio forms for effective learning</b>	43	12.7	46	13.6	76	22.5	47	13.9	126	37.3	3.2	1.24
<b>Social media facilitate access to current information and making learning process easy to students</b>	88	26.0	147	43.5	13	3.8	30	8.9	60	17.8	2.22	1.39
<b>Social media tools provide undergraduate students of FUDMA with new</b>	176	52.1	66	19.5	9	2.7	46	13.6	41	12.1	2.48	1.30

## opportunities to become independent in their learning and research easily

Table two above shows that 65.3% in total of the undergraduate students of FUDMA are in agreement that social media are easily used to facilitate learning process for better academic achievement. From the table, 65.4% of the total respondents strongly agree (106; 31.4%) and agreed (115; 34.0%) that social media are easily used to facilitate learning process among most of the undergraduate students of FUDMA for better academic achievement. This is reflected in a mean score of 2.44 and standard deviation of 1.44. Only 30.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed (45; 13.3%) and disagreed (59; 17.5%) that social media are easily used to facilitate learning process among most of the undergraduate students of FUDMA for better academic achievement, while 13 (3.8%) respondents remained undecided.

On the question on whether social media are easily used among undergraduate students for accessing scholarly information for learning rather than other information tools, responses from the table shows that only 19% in total of the respondents strongly agree (29; 8.6%) and agree (35; 10.4%) that social media are applications are easily used among undergraduate students for accessing scholarly information for learning rather than other information tools. This is reflected in a mean score of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 1.09. In total, 73% were in disagreement about the listed item. This clearly shows that strongly disagreed (39; 11.5%) and disagreed (208; 61.5%) that social media are easily used among undergraduate students for accessing scholarly information for learning rather than other information tools. while 27 (8.0%) respondents remained undecided.

Regarding the question on whether social media allow students of FUDMA to easily create, edit and share course contents in textual, video or audio forms for effective learning, responses from the table shows that only 26.3% of the respondents strongly agree (43; 12.7%) and agree (46; 13.6%) that social media allow students of FUDMA to easily create, edit and share course contents in textual, video or audio forms for effective learning. 51.2% of the respondents disagree (126; 37.3%) and strongly disagree (47; 13%) that social media allow students of FUDMA to easily create, edit and share course contents in textual, video or audio forms for effective learning, while 76 (22.5%) respondents remained undecided. This is reflected in a mean score of 3.2 and standard deviation of 1.42. The next statement in the hierarchy is that social media facilitate access to current information and making learning process easy to undergraduate students in FUDMA. The responses from the table revealed that 69.5% in total of the respondents strongly agreed (88; 26.0%) and agreed (147; 43.5%) that social media facilitate access to current information and making learning process easy to undergraduate students in FUDMA. This is reflected in a mean score of 2.22 and a standard deviation of 1.39. Based on the responses from the table, it indicates that only 26.7% strongly disagreed (30; 8.9%) and disagreed (60; 17.8%) that social media facilitate access to current information and making learning process easy to undergraduate students in FUDMA, while (13; 3.8%) respondents were undecided.

Social media tools provide undergraduate students of FUDMA with new opportunities

to become independent in their learning and research easily. Responses recorded in the Table reveal that overall 71.6% of the respondents strongly agreed (176; 52.1%) and agreed (66; 19.5%) that social media tools provide undergraduate students of FUDMA with new opportunities to become independent in their learning and research easily. This is reflected in a mean score of 2.48 and a standard deviation of 1.30. The responses recorded in the table clearly showed that only 16.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed (46; 13.6%) and disagreed (41; 12.1%) that social media tools provide undergraduate students of FUDMA with new opportunities to become independent in their learning and research easily, while 9 (2.7%) respondents were undecided on the listed option.

The responses indicate that there is strong disagreement among the respondents that social media are easily used among undergraduate students for accessing scholarly information for learning rather than other information tools. Perhaps this could be because most of the social media applications used by the undergraduate students are not meant for retrieving scholarly information for learning to them. This means there is need to enlighten the undergraduate students about the use of social media applications for easy learning in university.

Data on table 2 above shows that social media applications are easily used among undergraduate students for accessing scholarly information for learning rather than other information tools and use to easily create, edit and share course contents in textual, video or audio forms for effective learning, while the students disagreed that social media are easily used to facilitate learning process among most of the undergraduate students of FUDMA for better academic achievement, social media

facilitate access to current information and making learning process easy to students and social media tools provide undergraduate students of FUDMA with new opportunities to become independent in their learning and research easily.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The aim of the study is to ascertain the awareness and use of social media applications for learning among undergraduate students at FUDMA, Katsina State. Findings from the study reveal that students are only aware of WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Linked-In as tools for learning. While social media applications like Tiktok, Twitter, Blogs, Snapchat, Tumblr, Glosters, OoVoo, and Skype have not been utilized for learning by the students of FUDMA due to lack of awareness about their effectiveness. Supporting the findings of this study is Hanky's study (2014) which stresses that students in higher institutions of learning in Ghana were mostly aware of Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Linked-In, and Podcasting for their daily academic activities. However, in disagreement of the findings of the current study are Hargittai, Walejko and Gina (2018); Hamid, Rebecca and Mona (2020); Han, Xiong and Zhao's (2022) studies which conclude that users know more of Wikis, Blogs, and Twitter for learning and research.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Findings and discussions above indicate an ineffective use of social media applications for learning purposes among the undergraduate students in FUDMA, Katsina State. In other words, the study discovered that many social media applications are not optimally utilized by the students in the study area as indicated by the majority of the respondents. Many of the respondents know

only few social media applications that could be used for learning purposes. This is because, many kinds of social media platforms abound where students of the study area are either not aware of, or they do not know how to use them for learning. Such as applications include Snapchat, Tumblr, OOVVOO, Glusters, Skype, Twitter, and virtual tools like Moodle, E-learning student rooms, and academia, among others. As such, the study recommends that:

1. management of FUDMA should engage in a publicity drive that would sensitize their undergraduate students on the various social media applications and other e-learning tools that can enhance their learning experiences.
2. the culture of group discussions should be encouraged among the undergraduate students as well as motivating them to create and share short educational videos on platforms like Tiktok and Instagram. It would help to reinforce in them, better understanding of certain concepts from their peers.

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