

PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' ATTITUDE & EXTENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA UTILIZATION FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN MINNA METROPOLIS, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Students' learning can only be promoted when teachers employ technological innovations such as social media in disseminating instructional contents. Correct disposition and present usage of such innovations for academic purposes by pre-service teachers will go a long way to determine whether such would be integrated into teaching and learning when they eventually become teachers. This study was therefore carried out to investigate pre-service teachers' attitude and extent of social media utilization for educational purposes in tertiary institutions in Minna, Metropolis Niger State, Nigeria. The influence of gender on pre-service teachers' attitude towards utilization of social media was also examined. Cross-sectional survey design was adopted. Four research questions and two hypotheses were answered and tested respectively. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 1,200 pre-service teachers from two tertiary institutions. Researchers-developed questionnaire was used to elicit responses from respondents and was validated by two educational technology specialists and two test and measurement experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was computed and 0.89 using Cronbach alpha index was obtained in a single administration during pilot study. Data gathered were analyzed using percentage, mean, standard deviation and Mann-Whitney U test. Findings revealed that pre-service teachers have positive attitude towards the use of social media and that they do not use the platforms majorly for academic activities while gender has no influence on their attitude and usage. It was therefore recommended among others that pre-service teachers should be made aware and sensitized on benefits of using social media for educational activities and also that the use of social media should be integrated into the curriculum of teachers in training.

Keywords: *Attitude, Pre-service teachers, Social media, Social media utilization, Tertiary institutions*

Introduction

The world has been transformed into a global village by Information and Communication (ICT) tools where distance no longer pose barrier to message delivery, human interaction and sharing of information. One important tool of ICT is the internet which has greatly enhanced interaction among people through the use of social media and its platforms. Social media are platforms being used to create and exchange ideas and information among people using computer and mobile devices connected to internet (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). They enable users to create personal profiles, connect, share, engage in dialogue and participate in online activities. Popular among the social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Myspace, Instagram which are mostly being used by young adults especially those in tertiary institutions (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2008).

Tertiary education is the education following successful completion of secondary or post-primary schooling. The Nigeria's goal of tertiary education is channeled towards higher education through high level manpower training, self-reliance, national utility and international understanding Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2009). Realizing the importance of teachers to the growth and development of a nation, the Nigerian government ensures that tertiary institutions in the country offer teachers-training programmes where students undergoing such trainings are regarded as pre-service teachers and will later work in the education sector of the economy in order to contribute their quotas towards making Nigeria a developed nation.

Social media utilization for academic purpose will improve students' performance, hence, Ito, Baumer, Boyd, Cody, and Herr-Stephenson (2009) and Jenkins (2006) recommended that educators should embrace these new platforms and integrate them into teaching and learning processes at all levels of education. Masoud-ul-Hassan, Azhar, Hassan and Hassan (2014) in a study in which law, education and business management students were selected revealed that majority of students use social media but showed some apprehensions using them safely for educational purpose. Elda (2015) found that a considerable part of students use social networks to post notices about school, promoting their success in school, and talking with friends often for solving their homework. However, Shehu and Shehu (2014) in a study on challenges of social networking on students' reading habit found that majority of students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria uses social network majorly for non-academic purposes than for academic purposes. However, the utilization of social media is greatly influenced by the attitude of students.

Attitude is regarded as a predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner to a given subject (Okobia & Ogumogu, 2012). Elda (2015), Espuny Gonzalez and Gisbert (2011) and Lewis (2010) in different studies found out and reported that students have positive attitude towards the use of social media and suggested that social networks should be included in the curriculum for targeting students' current needs. Gender however is one of the variables affecting social media use, as there are some differences between use by men and women.

Brindha and Parameswaran (2015) reported that there is relationship between gender and attitude towards social media and this was affirmed by Lenhart et,al (2010), Tufekci, (2008), Sheldon (2008) and Baym, Zhang, Kunkel, Ledbetter, & Mei-Chen, (2007) who found that females have better attitude towards social media than their male counterparts. On utilization of social media for academic purposes, Leila and Rouhollah (2013) found that there is no significant difference between male and female students in the academic use of social networking. However, Mazman and Usluel (2011) found that females use social networks for academic purposes at a rate higher than their male counterparts.

Despite enormous studies that have been conducted on social media, the researchers could not locate any previous one that has been carried out to determine the attitude and extent of social media utilization for academic purposes by pre-service teachers in tertiary institutions in Minna, Niger State, Nigeria. Since students' learning can only be promoted when teachers employ technological innovations such as social media in disseminating instructional contents, correct disposition and present usage of such innovations for academic purposes by pre-service teachers will go a long way to determine whether such would be integrated into teaching and learning when they eventually become teachers. Hence this study was conducted.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study:

- (i) Do pre-service teachers in tertiary institutions in Minna, Niger State have positive or negative attitude towards utilization of social media?
- (ii) Do pre-service teachers in tertiary institutions in Minna, Niger State utilize social media for educational purposes?
- (iii) Does gender influence pre-service teachers' attitude towards utilization of social media?
- (iv) Does gender influence pre-service teachers' utilization of social media for educational purposes in tertiary institutions in Minna, Niger State?

Research Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses was formulated and tested in this study:

- HO₁: There is no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers' attitude towards utilization of social media in tertiary institutions in Minna, Niger Sate.

HO₂: There is no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers' utilization of social media for educational purposes in tertiary institutions in Minna Niger State.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was a cross-sectional survey design. The methodology involved the use of questionnaire to elicit needed data from respondents on their attitude and utilization of social media for educational purposes. The population of this study comprised of 3,485 regular pre-service teachers in the 2014/2015 academic session from two selected government-owned tertiary institutions in Minna, Niger State, Nigeria. The institutions are Federal University of Technology and Niger State College of Education. The sample for the study is made up of 1,200 pre-service teachers from the two selected schools.

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed in selecting respondents for this study. Firstly, purposive sampling procedure was used to select two government owned tertiary institutions in the study area. The institutions were purposefully selected because they offer teachers' training programmes. Thereafter, one faculty each was purposefully selected from the two institutions based on the fact that the selected faculties offer science or technology education courses to pre-service teachers. Stratified sampling technique was thereafter employed to select 1,200 pre-service teachers across all levels comprising of 600 male and 600 female students (more than one-third of the target population) from the selected faculties.

Researchers-designed closed ended questionnaire was used in collecting needed data from the respondents. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined after a trial testing using a simple random sample of 50 students from a different faculty at Federal University of Technology, Minna. The questionnaire was administered once on the respondents and a reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha formula. Data gathered from the administration of research instruments were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were answered using mean, standard deviation and percentages while the three hypotheses were tested using non-parametric statistics of Kruskal-Wallis H-test in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: Do pre-service teachers in tertiary institutions in Minna, Niger State have positive or negative attitude towards utilization of social media?

Table 1: Attitude of pre-service teachers towards the utilization of social media

No	Items	N	Mean	S.D	Decision
(i)	I feel it is important to be able to find any information whenever I want on social media	1,200	2.86	0.13	Agree
(ii)	I feel it is important to be able to access various social media platform any time I want	1,200	2.82	0.32	Agree
(iii)	I think it is important to keep up with the latest information about my discipline on social media.	1,200	2.63	0.13	Agree
(iv)	I regularly use social media because I find information I gathered through them useful	1,200	2.63	0.13	Agree
(v)	Social media make me build intimate relationship with people.	1,200	2.73	0.23	Agree
(vi)	Social media allow me to keep in touch with many friends	1,200	2.84	0.34	Agree
(vii)	Interaction on social media is enjoyable	1,200	2.59	0.08	Agree
(viii)	I get useful information on diverse areas on social media	1,200	2.74	0.24	Agree
(ix)	Information I obtain on social media are never	1,200	2.55	0.05	Agree

(x)	misleading I feel interaction on social media enhances learning	1,200	2.49	0.01	Disagree
Average Mean			2.77		

Decision Mean = 2.50

Table 1 shows the mean response of attitude of pre-service teachers in tertiary institution in Minna, Niger State towards the utilization of social media. A total number of 1,200 pre-service teachers responded to the 10 items. The table shows that respondents agree to 9 out of 10 items. The average mean response to all the 10 items is 2.77 which is up to 2.50. This indicates that pre-service teachers in tertiary institutions in Minna metropolis have positive attitude towards the utilization of social media.

Research Question 2: Do pre-service teachers in tertiary institutions in Minna, Niger State utilize social media for educational purposes?

Table 2: Pre-service teachers' responses on utilization of social media for educational purposes

S/N	Statement	N	Yes	%	No	%
(i)	I join group discussion on social media websites for revision on concepts taught in class	1,200	235	19.58	965	80.42
(ii)	I upload questions on social media websites to get answers from other subscribers on difficult assignment	1,200	376	31.58	821	68.42
(iii)	I interact with my lecturers through social media platforms to seek clarifications and further explanations on class activities	1,200	199	16.58	1001	83.42
(iv)	I download and watch videos with instructional content on social media	1,200	417	34.75	783	65.25
(v)	I brainstorm with my course mates through social media on difficult class assignment	1,200	288	24	912	76
(vi)	I interact with course mates through social media on group project and assignment	1,200	684	57	516	43
(vii)	I join academic professional groups similar to my course of study on social media to update my knowledge	1,200	678	56.5	522	43.5
(viii)	I easily get update from my colleagues on social media on activities in classrooms whenever I am unavoidably absent in class	1,200	711	59.25	489	40.75
(ix)	Usage of social media assist me to socialize with others thereby helping me in collaborative learning	1,200	566	47.17	634	52.83
(x)	The motive behind my regular usage of social media is to share, read, watch and download educative and instructional contents	1,200	442	36.83	758	63.17
Percentage Yes and No response			38.3%		61.7%	

Table 2 shows the percentage Yes or No responses of pre-service teachers in tertiary institutions in Minna metropolis to the utilization of social media for educational purposes. The table reveals that 61.7% of the responses of pre-service teachers are No to the 10 items. This indicates that pre-service teachers in tertiary institutions in Minna metropolis of Niger state do not utilize social media for educational purposes.

Testing of Null Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers' attitude towards utilization of social media.

Table 3: Mann-Whitney U test result of male and female pre-service teachers' attitude score towards utilization of social media

Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	P
Male	600	604.50	362700	5.415 ^{ns}	0.06
Female	600	596.50	357900		

NS: Not Significant at 0.05 level

Table 3 shows the Mann-Whitney result of male and female attitude score towards utilization of social media. The result indicated that there was statistically no significant difference between the two groups ($U = 5.415$, $p < 0.05$) with a mean rank score of 604.50 for male pre-service teachers and 596.50 for female pre-service teachers. On the basis of this, hypotheses one was not rejected. This implies that both male pre-service teachers and their female counterparts have positive attitude towards utilization of social media in tertiary institutions in Minna metropolis of Niger state, Nigeria.

HO₂: There is no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers' utilization of social media for educational purposes in tertiary institutions in Minna Niger State.

Table 4: Mann-Whitney U test result of male and female score regarding their utilization of social media for educational purposes

Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	P
Male	600	598.49	359094	1.646 ^{ns}	0.21
Female	600	602.51	361506		

NS: Not significant at 0.05 level

Table 4 shows the Mann-Whitney result of male and female score regarding their utilization of social media for educational purposes. The result indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups ($U = 1.646$, $p < 0.05$) with a mean rank score of 598.49 for male pre-service teachers and 602.51 for female pre-service teachers. On the basis of this, hypothesis two was not rejected. This implies that both male and female pre-service teachers do not use social media for educational purposes in tertiary institutions in Minna metropolis of Niger state, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of this study revealed that pre-service teachers in tertiary institutions in Minna, Niger State have positive attitude towards the utilization of social media. This finding is in agreement with the earlier findings of Elda (2015), Espuny et al. (2011), Lewis (2010) and Silius et al. (2010) who found that students have positive attitude towards the use of social media. This positive attitude according to Yara (2009) has the potential to facilitate learning.

Also, findings that emanated from this study revealed that pre-service teachers in tertiary institutions in Minna Niger State do not majorly utilize social media for educational purposes. This finding is in agreement with the earlier findings of Shehu and Shehu (2014) who found that students commonly use social networking for non-academic purposes and that of Masoud-ul-Hassan, et al. (2014) who found that students showed some apprehensions using social media for educational purposes. However, this finding is not in agreement with the earlier finding of Elda (2015) who also found that a considerable part of students use social networks for educational activities.

Findings of this study also revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers' attitude towards utilization of social media. This finding is in contrast to the earlier finding of Brindha and Parameswaran (2015) who found that there is relationship between gender and attitude towards social media utilization. Also this finding is not in agreement with the findings of Lenhart et,al (2010), Tufekci, (2008), Sheldon (2008) and Baym, Zhang, Kunkel, Ledbetter, & Mei-Chen, (2007) who found that females have better attitude towards social media than their male counterparts.

Similarly, finding of this study revealed that gender has no influence on pre-service teachers' utilization of social media for educational purposes in tertiary institutions in Minna metropolis of Niger state Nigeria. This finding is in agreement with the earlier finding of Leila and Rouhollah (2013) who found that there is no significant difference between male and female students in the academic use of social networking. However, this finding is not in agreement with the finding of Mazman and Usluel (2011) who found that females use social networks for academic purposes at a rate higher than their male counterparts.

Conclusion

Based on findings that emanated from this study, it can be concluded that pre-service teachers in tertiary institutions in Minna, Niger State have positive attitude towards the use of social media but majorly use the platforms for non-academic activities. Gender was also found not to influence their attitude and extent of usage for academic activities. If the attitude of pre-service teachers towards the use of social media is sustained and rightly channeled towards academic activities, their academic performance will be enhanced.

Recommendations

Based on the findings that emanated from this study, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) Pre-service teachers in tertiary institutions should be made aware and sensitized on ways and benefits of using social media for educational activities. This awareness will help to sustain their attitude and rightly channel their usage of such platforms towards profitable educational activities.
- (ii) Gender friendly instructional activities should be disseminated by lecturers through social media to students. This will help to improve the performance of both male and female students' performances in learning process.
- (iii) Curriculum planners should integrate the use of social media into the curriculum of teachers in training. This will help to prepare them for effective utilization of the platforms for profitable instructional activities when they become teachers.

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