PREFERENCE AND USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS AMONG POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Many researchers have studied the preference and use of Social Media in Nigeria but this was most common among university students. Very few studies have attempted to do this among Polytechnic students. This study, therefore, examined the preference and usage of Social Media applications among Polytechnic students in Ogun State, Nigeria. A descriptive research design of the non-experimental type was adopted. A sample of three hundred (300) students was obtained using the multistage sampling method. 'Preference and Usage of Social Media Application Questionnaire, was the instrument of data collection. Analysis of data was done using Mean, S.D, and t-test. Findings showed that Polytechnic students' first choice Social Media applications are YouTube, Google+, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Yahoo messenger, Snapchat and Twitter. The majority of them use the applications mainly for assignment purposes, aside from using them regularly for other academic purposes. Finally, finding showed that there exists significant difference in Social Media preference among Polytechnic students based on gender. The potential of Social Media for academic uses should be harnessed by Polytechnic students and their lecturers.

Keywords: preference, usage, social media, polytechnic students, Nigeria.

Introduction

Advancement and improvement in modern communication have assisted humans in connecting for interaction in the social world, and recently, in academia. It is therefore not uncommon to see students and lecturers in higher education leveraging on the exciting opportunities that improved communication technologies have brought to their institutions. In part, this has led to huge investment in and uptake of online teaching and learning activities by many universities globally. This is a result of technology constantly changing the way people communicate, and interact, and has also led to the emergence of an open social platform for interaction in the form of Social Media (Tayo et al. 2019).

Regardless of the term used, Social Media, Social Media tools, community websites, e-communities, social network services, social software tools, and online communities, among others, all point to the same function and are synonymously used (Wickramanayake & Jika, 2018). Social media has been described by many authors in different ways but all arrive at the same conclusion on the platform. For instance, Boateng and Amankwaa (2016) stated that, as an application and an online space, Social Media, allows users to communicate, and interact with each other. They stated further that Social Media affords individuals the opportunity to connect, communicate, share, establish and likely maintain connections with others for diverse reasons. Also, Ali, et al. (2016) posit that Social Media is the collection of various applications including WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube,

among others, which allow people to connect to share information through social networking. In addition, Junco et al. (2010) stated that Social Media is a collection of services, practices, and Internet websites, which support community building, collaborations, participation and sharing of information among individuals. Social Media has also been conceptualized as to be web-based applications that allow individual users and organizations the opportunity of creating, engaging, and sharing new user-generated information, or existing content in a digitalized environment via multi-way communications (Davis III, et al. 2015).

Some of the most popular social media platforms include Instagram, Facebook, Google Plus, WhatsApp, MySpace, Twitter, and LinkedIn, among others. Social Media have been classified into community websites and blogs such as YouTube and Wikipedia, and networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn (Swaminathan et al. 2013). Also, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), classified Social Media into blogs, content communities, collaborative projects, social networking sites (SNS), virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds. As stated by Eke et al. (2014), Social Media is included in various platforms including academic, business, social, sports, and political, religious, and romantic platforms. Sokoya et al. (2012) posit that Social Media keeps getting popular because it allows diverse users to connect in the online environment through the formation of groups, forums and communities in which information in diverse formats is shared without geographic barriers. It is worth stating that Social Media gives users the ground to interact in a two-way communication mode which allows users with online profiles to exchange views with others. For Social Media to be used, must be the availability of various electronic devices such as laptops, tablets, PDAs, i-pads, and several other Internet-based technologies. Hence, Social Media are described as technologies that facilitate social interactions among people; create opportunities for collaborations, while also enabling deliberations among people globally.

With regards to education, institutions and academics are continually exploring the exciting world of Social Media applications for collaborations and knowledge construction. Social Media continues to enjoy usage in institutions of higher learning as lecturers and their students can connect, and other scholars globally without any barrier (Tayo et al. 2019). Social Media, according to Boateng and Amankwaa (2016), has influenced stakeholders in education, especially lecturers and students who can interact seamlessly with each other to promote the construction and transfer of knowledge, and also improve teaching and learning activities. In order words, the use of Social Media platforms in higher institutions has positively impacted lecturers and students through the creation of academic platforms (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007). According to Ogedengbe and Quadri (2020), university students are now active users of Social Media platforms for academic reasons as well as for private reasons. Its embrace has been linked with its ability to transform and impact the routes of communication, mode of learning, the conduct of research and impact on educational activities in general. According to Swaminathan et al. (2013) and Hamade (2013), the use and continued popularity of Social Media in academia, especially among students, has increased rapidly over the years. In the same vein, it has become a vital source of information and other resources for them and the university community. This is likely a result of this generation of students being referred to as 'digital natives, 'net students', 'millennials', and 'net savvy', among others, who are closer to, and heavily utilize electronic gadgets (Shittu et al. 2011; Hess & Shrum, 2011).

Students' adoption and use of Social Media have generated lots of interest in academia as observed in much literature (Ifinedo, 2016; Van Doorn & Eklund, 2013), and this is just as the largest use of Social Media technology has been observed among

undergraduates globally. Ifinedo (2016) posits that many students are active users of Social Media daily. The majority of Nigerian undergraduates have access to and use Social Media applications as well. Social Media is not only now a common channel of communication between people of diverse backgrounds, but also a rapidly expanding avenue for knowledge construction and transfer among students and their lecturers (Nigerian Communications Commission, 2016; Lilley, Grodzinsky & Gumbus, 2012). Boateng and Amankwaa (2016) stated that students are on campus for academic reasons, and therefore, their academic life describes their activities which are about the work they do while in the Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education, especially when such activities involve studying and reasoning. This shows that the use of Social media constitutes an increasingly vital context in the academic lives of students, and this is worth examining for the sake of effective utilization.

While students' engagement with, and use of Social Media in higher institution environments have been well-documented in many developed nations and some developing nations such as Nigeria, yet, very few studies have examined its preference and usage among Polytechnic students in Nigeria. In Nigeria, there is a paucity of studies in Polytechnics specifically bothering on students' preferred Social Media applications and their usage. Also, the observation that the use of Social Media is open generally to the global community calls for a need to carefully consider its preference and usage among students, especially Nigerian Polytechnic students to find out their preferences and usage pattern. While there exists a large knowledge pool in the present discussion, most of them have been carried out using university students with little being carried out among Polytechnic students. The need to appropriately document the Polytechnic students' preference and use of Social Media applications is needed for necessary policy formulations and implementation in Polytechnic education in Nigeria. Therefore, this research to explore polytechnic students' preference and use of Social Media with regards to examining their preferred Social Media applications for learning; determining the reasons why they prefer their choice Social Media applications for learning; examining how often they use their preferred Social Media applications for academic purposes; and, also find out if any significant difference exists in Social Media application preference among Polytechnic students based on gender.

The present study is hinged on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which is intertwined with the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Based on these models, it was reasoned that Perceived usefulness (PU), and Perceived ease of use (PEOU) are the major factors that could influence Polytechnic students' preference and use of Social Media for various activities. The two major determinants of students' acceptance of innovative technologies such as Social Media, according to TAM are PU, which is the degree to which students believe that using Social Media will enhance their academic activities, and PEOU, which is the degree to which students believe that they do not need to put in more efforts to the use of Social Media in their academic engagement. These two factors constitute key influencers of students' intentions to utilize technology. It should be noted that the dimension of usefulness can assist in increasing the rate at which students learn or embrace any technology, the reason being that their academic engagements will be more effective, as perceived. In order words, students' perceived usefulness will influence their preference for and usage of Social Media (Ogedengbe & Quadri, 2020; Elkaseh, et al. 2016).

According to Venkatesh, et al. (2003), the feeling of satisfaction that students derive during the utilization of Social Media is likely to increase their levels of motivation. Also, Performance Expectancy (PE) in UTAUT, which is the degree to which students believe that

using technology will afford them positive gains (Venkatesh et al. 2003), is key in students' uptake and use of Social Media. Given this, PE relates to whether students believe that the use of Social Media in their various academic activities will improve their academic outcomes. In the study of students' preference and use of Social Media applications, Social Influence (SI), which connotes the degree to which students perceive the importance of others believe that they should use technology (Venkatesh et al. 2003), is also another determinant relating to behaviour or intention to use (Ogedengbe & Quadri, 2020).

Literature Review

Because Social Media has become, and also plays prominent roles in global communication, and particularly on campus, Talaue, et al. (2018) reported that they assist students with access to, and dissemination of education-related information on and off-campus. Many students, therefore, use Social Media as a form of learning tool, just as many academic institutions now increasingly use the platforms, such as LinkedIn and Facebook to create connections with their current, and prospective students, and also for the delivery of educational content (Paul, et al. 2012). With regards to the importance of Social Media, many institutions now create and maintain online profiles and groups on Social Media sites including LinkedIn, Facebook, and others, on which faculty can express ideas, interact, and share resources (Tayo, 2019). Kim and Sin (2011) have reported that as Social Media becomes popular daily, especially among students, there is a need to examine the important roles they play as information sources. This is crucial because it's necessary to understand the type of Social Media used by students as information sources (Anyanwu, Ossai-Onah & Iroeze, 2013).

Onuoha et al. (2012) reported that Social Media has created a great avenue for undergraduate students to connect, regardless of time and space, just as the emergence of Twitter, MySpace, WhatsApp, Eskimi, YouTube, and Facebook, among others, has opened up a new world of social interactions (Levine, 2012). The preferred Social Media applications by students, as reported by Wickramanayake and Jika (2018), and based on the order of importance include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, or Skype. Also, Fasae and Adegbilero-Iwari (2016) reported that the majority of students prefer Facebook, Google+, and Twitter. In addition, Facebook was reported as the most popular and preferred among students (Junco, 2012; Singh & Gill, 2015). Stanciu et al., (2012) also reported Facebook as being the most preferred application, while Hamade (2013) reported Twitter, followed by Facebook. In the reports of Ruleman (2012), the majority of students prefer Facebook, and Skype, while Stainbank and Gurr (2016) also reported Facebook and Twitter, as the most preferred and popular in that order (Wickramanayake et al. 2018).

According to Lenhart, et al. (2010), students constantly interact and use Social Media applications for diverse reasons. According to Junco (2012), students prefer to use Social Media for two reasons: because their friends/classmates are there and also as a result of no complexity in the usage of the apps, in this case, Facebook. Also, Ito et al. (2008), students prefer to use Social Media because their friends and family are also online; because it encourages genuine feedback among the students which is perceived as useful to their academic activities, and because it encourages the formation of user communities which are enormous to them for faster sharing of information (Alkan & Bardakci, 2017; Curran & Lennon, 2011; Picard, 2009; Hagerty, 2009, Ito et al. (2008). Also, Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) reported that Social Media is used due to its important characteristics such as social networking, and also for its fascinating educative, participatory, flexible, and collaborative features. This is also as Lahiry et al. (2019) reported a higher percentage of students agreeing that their utilization of the social applications has positively improved their academic

outcomes. In like manner, the use of the technology for academic reasons, according to Boahene, et al. (2019), is positively linked with the academic performance of students.

Moran, et al. (2011) reported that the use of social applications by students concerning academic purposes plays important role in their placement. Given this, many people are concerned with how students can improve their academic engagements based on this usage. Social Media platforms make it easier for students in tertiary institutions to communicate their course contents, work collaboratively, as well as encourage discussions among them. Various studies have reported that students often use Social Media for academic purposes due to its flexibility of time and place, as reported by Shen, et al. (2006), cited in Wiid, et al. (2014). Students also use the technology in education because it supports collaborative learning, and encourages individuals to engage in analytical thinking, just as it also improves communication and, writing skills (Mazman & Usluel, 2010). According to the reports of Fatokun (2019), the majority of undergraduates often use Social for educational activities, just as also reported that students commented that their daily utilization of Social Media did assist them in improving their learning outcomes. The average time spent by tertiary students on Facebook, according to Hong et al., (2014), was reported to be more than 4.5 hours daily. Compared with many other types of research carried out in the higher education sector, the time is higher. Also, Singh and Gill (2015) reported that a very high majority of students spent almost an hour on Social Media daily, while Hamade (2013) reported over sixty per cent of students accessed their preferred Social Media as many times as possible in a day.

Pempek, et al. (2009), in Tayo (2019), reported that the majority of students spend quality hours on Social Media daily, and this is common among younger ones, who spend time more than twice the average amount of time spent on school yearly (Rideout, 2012). Talaue, et al. (2018) also reported that the time students spent on Social Media harm their academic performance, just as Ghareb and Sharif (2015) reported that undergraduates often use Facebook on daily basis with an average time of one to three hour. According to Stanciu et al. (2012), sixty-seven per cent of students access Social Media sites between 1 and 5 times daily, while Neier and Zayer (2015) reported a higher percentage of over eighty per cent accessing Social Media daily. The study of Fasae and Adegbilero-Iwari (2016) also aligned in this direction as it also reported over two-thirds of its respondents use Social Media daily, while less than twenty per cent use it occasionally.

With regards to gender, Guimaraes (2014) and Hamade (2013) reported Facebook as the most popular, and preferred by the females, compared with the males, just as it was also reported that females use social applications more than the males (Stainbank & Gurr, 2016). Also, Hargittai (2007) reported gender as playing a significant role in the use of social applications. As reported earlier, women use social applications more than men (Ufuophu-Biri, 2020). Also, the findings of Joinson (2008) corroborate Hargittai, reporting females use social applications like Facebook, or MySpace more than males, but males are far more likely to use Linkedln than females. Madden and Zickuhr (2011) reported also that Social Media platforms are popular mainly among female students, just as Hampton, et.al. (2011) also confirmed. Gender is a vital factor in the embrace of social applications among students, based on the reports of a higher percentage of females using social media (Mazman & Usluel, 2011). Also, Al-Sharqi and Hashim (2016), and Guimaraes (2014) reported a significant correlation between gender and Social Media usage, and studies corroborating this finding include those of Alnjadat et al. (2019), Alkaabi, et al. (2017), Gok (2015), and Abdelraheem (2013).

Method

The study adopted the descriptive survey design of the non-experimental type. The population comprised all students in three Ogun State-owned Polytechnics. The multistage sampling technique was used for sample selection, in which each Polytechnic selected was stratified into Schools, while each School was further stratified into Departments. In each case, four Schools were selected per Polytechnic and from each School, one Department was randomly selected. From each Department, 25 were randomly selected using the simple random sampling technique, making a total of 100 students per School. This was repeated in each Polytechnic to get a sample of three hundred (300) students.

A validated instrument titled 'Preference and Usage of Social Media Applications Questionnaire (PUSMAQ) (r = .79)" was used for data collection. The instrument was further validated by experts in instrument development in the Department of Educational Technology of a State University in Nigeria. The instrument requested the demographic data of the respondents and also contained items based on the research questions and hypothesis raised in the study. Part B was further divided into three sections. Section I contained items on students' preferred Social Media applications while section II contained items on reasons why students prefer their chosen Social Media applications. Sections III contained items on how often students use their preferred Social Media applications for academic activities. The options were based on a 4-points Likert Scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) and Regularly, Rarely and Never, respectively. The instrument was administered to the selected students on their various campuses of learning after seeking and obtaining their willingness and permission to participate in the study. Research questions 1 to 3 were answered using Mean and Standard Deviations while the sole hypothesis in the study was tested using a t-test at a 0.05 level of significance.

Findings

What are the most preferred Social Media applications for learning among Polytechnic students in Ogun State?

Table 1.
Showing results on the most preferred Social Media applications for learning among Polytechnic students in Ogun State

Preference	Media Apps/Sites	f %	Mean	SD
1st Choice	YouTube, Google+, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Yahoo messenger, SnapChat and Twitter.	98 (33.6)	3.02	2.644
2nd Choice	LinkedIn, BBM, Imo and Skype.	75 (25.7)	2.88	2.150
3rd Choice	Badoo, hi5, 2go, Nimbuzz and Ning.	64 (21.9)	3.42	2.970
4th Choice	Hangout, DailyMotion, Eskimi, Teachstreet, Window messenger.	41 (14.0)	3.07	2.504
5th Choice	Skoob, Tumbir, ebuddy, MSN live, Yamme and TalkBizNow.	14 (4.8)	3.14	2.070
		292 (100%)		

The results in Table 1 show that 98 (33.6%; $\bar{X}$ = 3.02) of the students prefer YouTube, Google+, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Yahoo messenger, Snapchat and Twitter as their first choice Social Media applications/sites for learning. As their second choice, 75 (21.98%; $\bar{X}$ = 2.88) prefer LinkedIn, BBM, Imo and Skype for learning. Also, as

their third choice Social Media applications/sites for learning, 64 (21.9%; $\overline{X} = 3.42$) of the students prefer Badoo, hi5, 2go, Nimbuzz and Ning. In addition to this, students totalling 41 (14.0%; $\overline{X} = 3.07$) prefer Hangout, Daily Motion, Eskimi, TeachStreet and Window messenger as their fourth choice applications for learning, while 14 (4.8%; $\overline{X} = 3.14$) prefer Skoob, Tumbir, eBuddy, MSN live, Yammer and TalkBizNow as their fifth choice Social Media applications/sites for learning. the result shows that YouTube, Google+, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Yahoo messenger, Snapchat and Twitter are the students' most preferred Social Media applications for learning.

What are the reasons Polytechnic students prefer to use Social Mediab applications in education?

Table 2.
Showing results on the reasons Polytechnic students prefer to use Social Media applications in education

Reasons for using Social Media Apps	f (%)	Mean	SD
Assignment purpose	102 (34.9)	3.69	1.254
For preparing notes	34 (11.6)	4.85	.359
For collaboration with other students	73 (25.0)	4.67	.473
For communication only	63 (21.6)	4.49	.504
Other reasons	20 (6.8)	4.60	.503
	292 (100%)		

The results in Table 2 show that 102 (34.9%) of the students use their preferred Social Media applications for assignment purposes, 34 (11.6%) use their preferred Social Media applications for preparing notes, while 73 (25.0%) use their preferred Social Media applications for collaborating with other students. Also, the results show that 63 (21.6%) use their preferred Social Media applications for communication only, while 20 (6.8%) use their preferred Social Media applications for other reasons. The result implies that the majority of the students (102; 34.9%) use their preferred social media applications for assignment purposes.

How often do Polytechnic students use their preferred Social Media applications for academic purposes?

Table 3.
Showing results on how often Polytechnic students use their preferred Social Media applications for academic purposes

Media Apps/Sites	Regularly f (%)	Rarely f (%)	Never f (%)
Twitter	292 (100%)	-	-
YouTube	292 (100%)	-	-
Google+	189 (64.7%)	103 (35.3%)	-
Facebook	292 (100%)	-	-
LinkedIn	231 (79.1%)	61 (20.9%)	-
BBM	202 (68.9%)	91 (31.1%)	-
Imo	145 (49.7%)	68 (23.3%)	79 (27.1%)
WhatsApp	292 (100%)	-	-
2go	-	101 (34.5%)	191 (65.4%)
hi5	-	292 (100%)	-

Hangout	-	292 (100%)	-
MSN live	-	112 (38.4%)	180 (61.6%)
Skype	245 (83.9%)	47 (16.1%)	-
Yahoo messenger	-	292 (100%)	-
Yamme	-	292 (100%)	-
Badoo	-	292 (100%)	-
Instagram	115 (39.4%)	177 (60.6%)	-
DailyMotion	91 (31.1%)	202 (68.9%)	-
Eskimi	-	292 (100%)	-
Teachstreet	-	292 (100%)	
Window messenger	94 (32.2%)	198 (67.8%)	-
Nimbuzz	91 (31.1%)	202 (68.9%)	-
SnapChat	-	292 (100%)	-
Ebuddy	-	292 (100%)	-
Tumbir	-	292 (100%)	-
TalkBizNow	-	292 (100%)	-
Skoob	-	292 (100%)	-
Ning	-	292 (100%)	-

The results in Table 3 show that all the participants, 292 (100%) regularly use Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and WhatsApp for academic purposes. The result also shows that 189 (64.7%) regularly use Google+ while 103 (35.3%) rarely use it; 231 (791%) regularly use LinkedIn while 61 (20.9%) rarely use it; 202 (68.9%) regularly use BBM while 91 (31.1%) rarely use it for academic purposes. In addition, 145 (49.7%) regularly use Imo, 68 (23.3%) rarely use it, while 79 (27.1%) never use it. In the case of 2go, 101 (34.5%) rarely use it while 191 (65.4%) never use it just as all the students, 292 (100%) rarely use hi5, Hangout, Snapchat, Ebuddy, Tumbir, TalkBizNow, Skoob, Ning, Yahoo messenger, Yammer, Badoo, Eskimi and TeachStreet for academic purposes. Furthermore, the result shows that 112 (38.4%) students rarely use MSN live while 180 (61.6%) never use it for academic purposes. Finally, the result shows that Skype is regularly used by students totalling 245 (83.9%) for academic purposes, while 47 (16.1%) rarely use it; 115 (39.4%) regularly use Instagram, while 177 (60.6%) rarely use it; 91 (31.1%) regularly use DailyMotion, while 202 (68.9%) rarely use it; 94 (32.2%) regularly use Windows Messenger, while 198 (67.8%) rarely use it; 91 (31.1%) regularly use Nimbuzz while 202 (68.9%) rarely use it. Based on the results, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, Facebook, LinkedIn, BBM, Imo, WhatsApp and Skype are the regularly used Social Media applications by Polytechnic students for various academic purposes.

There is no significant difference in Social Media applications preference among Polytechnic students based on gender.

Table 4.
Showing t-test analysis result on Social Media applications preference among Polytechnic students based on gender

Variable	N	Mean	STD	t-cal	t-tab	p-value	Remark
Male	165	4.28	1.103	39.718	1.9719	.000	Significant
Female	127	3.57	1.360				

As shown in Table 4, there is a significant difference in Social Media applications' preferences based on gender. This is evident in the result (t-cal = 39.718 > p = (.000) < 0.05)

as shown in the Table. Also, there is a difference in the mean between male ($\overline{X} = 4.28$) and female ($\overline{X} = 3.57$) students, implying that Polytechnic students' preference for Social Media applications differs concerning gender.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined Polytechnic students' preference and use of social media applications in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study found that YouTube, Google+, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Yahoo messenger, Snapchat and Twitter are the most preferred social applications among Polytechnic students. According to Kim and Sin (2011), Social Media becomes popular daily, especially among students, and therefore, there is the need to examine the important roles they play as information sources, and this is crucial, as noted by Anyanwu, Ossai-Onah and Iroeze, (2013) because it's necessary to understand what the type of Social Media used by students as information sources. The preferred Social Media applications by students, as reported by Wickramanayake and Jika (2018), and based on the order of importance include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, or Skype. Also, Fasae and Adegbilero-Iwari (2016) reported that the majority of students prefer Facebook, Google+, and Twitter. In addition, Facebook was reported as the most popular and preferred among students (Junco, 2012; Singh & Gill, 2015). Stanciu et al., (2012) also reported Facebook as being the most preferred application, while Hamade (2013) reported Twitter, followed by Facebook. In the reports of Ruleman (2012), the majority of students prefer Facebook, and Skype, while Stainbank and Gurr (2016) also reported Facebook and Twitter, as the most preferred and popular in that order (Wickramanayake et al. 2018). Onuoha et al. (2012) reported that Social Media has created a great avenue for undergraduate students to connect, regardless of time and space, just as the emergence of Twitter, MySpace, WhatsApp, Eskimi, YouTube, and Facebook, among others, has opened up a new world of social interactions (Levine, 2012).

Also, the study found that most Polytechnic students use their preferred Social Media applications for assignment purposes, for preparing notes, while some use their preferred Social Media applications for collaborating with other students. It was also reported that some use their preferred Social Media applications for communication only, while others reported using theirs for other reasons. The study by Moran, et al. (2011) reported that the use of social applications by students concerning academic purposes plays important role in their placement. Given this, many people are concerned with how students can improve their academic engagements based on this usage. Students also use the technology in education because it supports collaborative learning, and encourages individuals to engage in analytical thinking, just as it also improves communication and, writing skills (Mazman & Usluel, 2010). Social Media platforms make it easier for students in tertiary institutions to communicate their course contents, work collaboratively, as well as encourage discussions among them. Various studies have reported that students often use Social Media for academic purposes due to its flexibility of time and place (Wiid, et al. 2014). According to the reports of Fatokun (2019), the majority of undergraduates often use Social for educational activities, just as also reported that students commented that their daily utilization of Social Media did assist them in improving their learning outcomes.

In addition, the study found that Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp are used regularly use for academic purposes; Google+, Hangout, Snapchat, Ebuddy, Tumbir, Talk Biz Now, Skoob, Ning, Yahoo messenger, Yammer, Badoo, Eskimi, and TeachStreet are rarely used for academic purposes. With regards to how often students

use social media applications, it was reported that the average time spent by tertiary students on Facebook, according to Hong et al., (2014), was reported to be more than 4.5 hours daily. Compared with many other types of research carried out in the higher education sector, the time is higher. Also, Singh and Gill (2015) reported that a very high majority of students spent almost an hour on Social Media daily, while Hamade (2013) reported over sixty per cent of students accessed their preferred Social Media as many times as possible in a day. Pempek, et al. (2009), in Tayo (2019), reported that the majority of students spend quality hours on Social Media daily, and this is common among younger ones, who spend time more than twice the average amount of time spent on school yearly (Rideout, 2012). Talaue et al. (2018) also reported that the time students spent on Social Media harm their academic performance, just as Ghareb and Sharif (2015) reported that undergraduates often use Facebook on daily basis with an average time of one to three hour. In the reports of Stanciu et al. (2012), sixty-seven per cent of students access Social Media sites between 1 and 5 times daily, while Neier and Zayer (2015) reported a higher percentage of over eighty per cent accessing Social Media daily. The study of Fasae and Adegbilero-Iwari (2016) also aligned in this direction as it also reported over two-thirds of its respondents use Social Media daily, while less than twenty per cent use it occasionally.

Finally, the study reported a significant difference in Social Media applications preference based on gender. Gender is a vital factor in the embrace of social applications among students, based on the reports of a higher percentage of females using social media (Mazman & Usluel, 2011). Studies have also shown Facebook is the most popular, and preferred by the females, compared to the males, just as it was also reported that females use social applications more than the males (Stainbank & Gurr, 2016; Guimaraes, 2014; Hamade, 2013). Also, Hargittai (2007) reported gender as playing a significant role in the use of social applications. As reported earlier, women use social applications more than men (Ufuophu-Biri, 2020). Also, the findings of Joinson (2008) corroborate Hargittai, reporting females use social applications like Facebook, or MySpace more than males, but males are far more likely to use LinkedIn than females. Madden and Zickuhr (2011) reported also that Social Media platforms are popular mainly among female students, just as Hampton, et.al. (2011) also confirmed. Also, Al-Sharqi and Hashim (2016), and Guimaraes (2014) reported a significant correlation between gender and Social Media usage, and studies corroborating this finding include those of Alnjadat et al. (2019), Alkaabi, et al. (2017), Gok (2015), and Abdelraheem (2013).

The study has shown that preference and usage of Social Media applications among Polytechnic students in Ogun State differ by preference, usage reason, and gender. This goes to confirm that preference for Social Media among Polytechnic students is based on choice and that the individual choice is based on personal reasons. Findings also revealed that Polytechnic students differ based on Social Media preferences based on gender. Based on the findings, it was suggested that school authorities should devise means through which the academic potential of Social Media could be harnessed positively on Polytechnic campuses for students' use since students cannot be separated from using one or more Social Media applications.

Also, it is recommended that stakeholders invest in developing Social Media applications that students can use while on campus to improve their academic potential. In addition, lecturers should endeavour to move along with Social Media trends since almost all students use them, and also because there are specific Social Media applications which can be used solely for academic purposes. By so doing, lecturers could be kept abreast of the latest developments in the Social Media arena and such information could be used to tailor their

contents to the specific needs of their students. Finally, Educational Technologists in the country are advised to go into academic software developments for students' use. Such Apps could end up pushing the interests of students in the direction of their academic activities on campus instead of just surfing the Internet for social and entertainment reasons only.

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