
SOCIAL MEDIA SITES AS LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to investigate knowledge acquisition through the Internet and social media among male and female undergraduates of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. The study identified the types of social media sites used by undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU); it examined and explored the kinds of learning by the female and male students of OAU on social media and the types of social media used; and highlighted the opposing sides and benefits of these social media sites to the student's learning. The descriptive survey design was employed for this study, and quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather and analyse data. The population for the study consisted of all the undergraduates in the 14 faculties at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Four faculties were selected, and from each faculty, one department was selected using a simple random sampling technique making four departments. From each department, 60 students were selected using a convenient sampling technique, making up 240 respondents.

For the qualitative aspect, from each of the departments already selected, three male and three female undergraduates were selected using a purposive sampling technique making a total number of 24 undergraduates. Two instruments were used for the study: a self-designed questionnaire and an interview guide. The data were analysed using frequency distribution, percentage scores, mean and standard deviation, and content analysis. The findings showed that the knowledge acquired through social media differed between the sexes of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife undergraduates. The social media sites used by male and female undergraduates were almost identical. However, there were differences concerning their aims and purposes for using these social media sites.

Key words: Social Media; Internet; Learning; Knowledge Acquisition; social networking; students

INTRODUCTION

Innovations in communication technologies have multiplied on a scale never before seen, revolutionizing not only the way we communicate but also how we relate to one another. In many ways, the changes new social media technologies have brought about are so profound that they permeate and extend the pedagogical space. In the world of computers, gaming consoles, MP3 players, and smartphones, smartboards have replaced chalkboards, and laptops are the new paper and pen (Weisgerber & Butler, 2010). Over the years, college students' social networking has become increasingly popular. It is a way to make connections on campus and with friends outside of school (Abdelraheem, 2013). The whole world has turned into a "small village" as regards the advent of social media, as posited by (Ellison, Stienfied & Lamp (2007). The globe has been unified and has received tremendous change through the development of technology, which serves as the perfect medium to investigate the vast extent of knowledge (Ellison et al., 2007). The use of the Internet is therefore increasing day by day all over the world. Most youth, including television viewers and radio listeners, is now moving from electronic to social media. The Internet has linked people together to share information and awareness of other people with their viewpoints or to take part in social networking. Social media has shortened

distances and brought people closer (Rabia, Nawaz, Mubarak, & Ali, 2019).

The term "social media," according to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), refers to "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Social media has also been defined by Rabia et al. (2019) as a collection of applications such as (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Viber, Messenger, and Instagram). Social media is a broad term that describes software tools that create user-generated content that can be shared (Sinclair & Vogus, 2011; Ellison et al., 2007). Social media can also be interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate creating and sharing of information, ideas, career interest, and other forms of expression via communication and networks. It is an online community where people interact (Ellison et al., 2007).

Social media comprises online applications for social networking sites, social bookmarking, sharing tools, social citation tools, blogging and micro-blogging tools, virtual worlds, e-conferencing presentation, audio and video tools, e-project management tools, research and writing with collaboration tools; primarily developed to foster user-centered social interaction. Social media platforms have therefore impacted how

various professionals share information with customers, clients, and users in an effective manner—fundamentally changing the ways that their organizations communicate (Odewumi, Bamigboye, Olawuyi and Bamigboye 2017; Simons, Ocepek & Barker, 2016).

To Marshall (2003), cited in Wilson (2018), the media plays a significant role in people's everyday routines, actions, and reactions. Digital social media, in many ways, influence people's life as it expands our social circle and explores new horizons through online connection. However, it is changing the approach to communication. The young generation often uses Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, Skype, Yahoo Messenger, WhatsApp, and Instagram for communication. Also, Lucky (2013), cited in Rabia, Adnan, Misbah, Nawaz, Gillani, & Arshad (2020), described social media as the means of connections among people they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. This online technology tools enable people to communicate quickly and share information, text, audio, video, images, podcasts, and other multimedia communication. Social media allows people to expand their social connections by contacting and becoming friends with people they may not have met in person. Social media supports the maintenance of existing social ties and forming of new connections

outside pre-existing social groups. Most youth, including television viewers and radio listeners, is now moving from electronic to social media. The Internet has linked people together to share information and awareness of other people with their viewpoints or to take part in social networking. Social media has shortened distances and brought people closer (Rabia et al., 2020).

Similarly, Albert (2015) posits that social media allow people to maintain connections with friends and family and disseminate thoughts and information to a potentially large audience in seconds. Social media is increasingly becoming a critical element of human society by changing our social norms, values, and culture. Information sharing and content distribution are becoming critical social desires; social media has changed how people, including university students, interact and intermingle (Abbas, Aman, Nurunnabi & Bano 2019). This new form of media plays a vital role in content sharing among university students and the rest of society; students can now participate in social discussions by sharing images, posting their comments, and disseminating ideas (Abbas et al., 2019). Social media users can create and organise profiles for themselves, edit and comment on each other's posts and share information with others. Social media is an essential education source today (Ellison et al., 2007).

The rapid growth of technology has redefined and changed the world immensely, not only in how we connect but also in how we learn. This assertion is evident concerning how technological innovations are used as the best channels for exploring the vast area of knowledge Edegoh (2012) cited in Wilson (2018). The rise of social software provides new avenues and opportunities for increased participation and collaboration and an opportunity to change how people learn (Abdelraheem, 2013). Abbas et al. (2019) opined that in today's world, social media is playing an indispensable role in the learning behavior of university students to achieve sustainable education. Social media have been shown to increase students' learning and performance.

Social media open up multiple options to add a new dimension to the learning and knowledge process. Social networks and learning are like Siamese twins; we learn through networking and interactions with individuals of the same interest and group. Social media have become a platform where students can learn and contribute to learning; they significantly impact education. Social network tools allow students and institutions multiple opportunities to improve learning methods. Through social media, students can benefit from online tutorials and resources shared through them (Ellahi, 2018).

Furthermore, Albert (2015) also explained that social media could be used for educational purposes and facilitate learning experiences that may be cumbersome, time-consuming, or not possible in a traditional brick-and-mortar setting. Students' access to social media enables anyone with an internet connection and the appropriate device to read, write, and upload Web content and allows for immediate commentary and interaction on material posted on the Web. According to Albert (2015), commonly used social media platforms include Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Wikipedia, Google Docs, wikis, and blogs. These sites allow students to take active roles in their learning. Rather than passively absorbing information (the traditional model of education), students are invited to participate in a culture of learning. Learning through social media is collaborative and motivates students to work harder and perform better. Therefore, social media dramatically impacts education (Abbas et al., 2019; Wolf et al., 2018).

In teaching, Albert (2015) again indicated that social media could also assist educators in creating interactive learning experiences that complement existing practices in the music classroom. Thoughtful integration of social media through tasks that require engagement in higher-order cognitive activities, such as synthesis and evaluation, can enrich a child's educational experience

using technology with which one may already be familiar. Social media platforms also facilitate sharing a myriad of online resources from which students can learn and discuss, allowing for learning to continue outside a brick-and-mortar classroom. Additionally, social media platforms can support meaningful educational activities that may be time-consuming to execute in a synchronous face-to-face class (Albert, 2015). Therefore, today, social media has become an essential part of our everyday lives, and social communication tool has become popular on college campuses. They provide platforms for people worldwide to communicate, exchange messages, acquire and share knowledge, and interact with each other regardless of geographical location (Albert, 2015).

In the past, internet users had been characterized as male-dominated, but evidence indicates that the gender gap in internet use is rapidly diminishing. If more females are using the Internet, there would be specific applications they prefer, which would differ from those of males (Weiser, 2000). Essential to understanding the behavior of humans within their socio-economic environment is the observation that they simultaneously play different roles in various interconnected social networks, such as friendship networks, communication networks, family networks, or business

networks. Gender difference is a prominent aspect of social media. How a man or boy will use social media is entirely different from how a woman or young girl will use it. Although technologies used to perform housework have an apparent historical connection to gender in many cultures, a readier connection to telephones. Telephone use has long had gendered connections ranging from the widespread assumptions that women talk more than men. The female gender has been associated with extensive and trivial telephone use for purely social purposes. Females use social media more explicitly for social connections.

For example, they tend to self-disclose more to their good friends. They tend to be more sociable and sensitive, have more intimate social networks, and more actively involved in the intimate conversation than males. The driving force of the male gender towards the utilization of social media tends to revolve around making new relationships in social network environments more than the female gender. Picture-sharing tasks are prevalent among females, while LinkedIn's user base is predominantly male (Igarashi, Takai, & Yoshida (2005); Odewumi et al., 2017; Dijck, 2013).

However, male and female social media users exhibit different behavior and motivation; they share some similarities, and both male and female interest overlap when using social media, as women typically report more difficulty finding information on the Internet than men do. Conversely, men feel more comfortable using the Internet for more reasons (e.g., chat groups, newsgroups, and research). Men also have more sophisticated internet skills (e.g., creating web pages, changing "cookie" preferences, and connecting to internet audio broadcasts) than women. In addition, men use the Internet for obtaining news, weather, and sports information; shopping; entertainment (Weiser, 2000).

From the above, the introduction of social media has genuinely solved problems of communication barriers, especially as it has allowed its users access to an unlimited flow of information from a user to user. They provide platforms for people worldwide to communicate, exchange messages, share knowledge, and interact with each other regardless of geographical location. Therefore, today, social media has become part of our everyday lives. Social media has been established for decades for fun or communication and as an avenue through which individuals acquire a vast amount of knowledge.

Scholars regarding young adults' use of social media for learning have conducted research. For example, Akpomuje and Akinsoto (2016) found out that there were different kinds of learning themes that adult learners are exposed to by interfacing with the different platforms of social media. Other authors that have worked on social media include Amos (2012), who studied the effects of social networking on Nigerian youths/students, and Wilson (2018), who studied the effect of social media on the spelling ability of students of the Federal College of Education. Yola also in Nigeria, while Rabia et al.'s (2020) study focused on finding both social media's positive and negative impact on youth in Pakistan. A lot has been done on learning experiences through social media.

However, this article is out to identify, explore, examine, and compare the social media sites peculiar to male and female students at Obafemi Awolowo University and how they are helpful in their acquisition of knowledge.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was carried out to investigate knowledge acquisition through social media among male and female undergraduates at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Explore the kinds of learning by the female and male undergraduate students of O.A.U.
- ii. What are the benefits and opposing sides of these social media sites to the learning of the undergraduate students of O.A.U.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was employed for this study, and quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather and analyse data. The population for the study consisted of all the undergraduates at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Four of the 14 faculties of the university were selected, namely, Agriculture, Education, Arts, and Environmental and Design and Management (EDM), using a random sampling technique. One department was selected from each of the faculties using a random sampling technique.

Respondents were selected from the Department of Agricultural Extension, the Institute of Education, the Department of Dramatic Arts, and the Department of Fine and Applied Arts using a random sampling technique. From each department, 60 students were selected using a convenient sampling technique, making a total of 240 participants aged between 16 and 35 years, and about half were female. For the qualitative aspect, from each of the departments already selected aged, three male and three female undergraduates were selected using the purposive sampling technique, making a total number of 24

undergraduates. Two instruments were used for the study, namely, a questionnaire and the typoscript. The data were analysed using frequency distribution, percentage scores, mean and standard deviation, and content analysis was also adopted to understand social media usage differentials among male and female undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

RESULTS

Research Question one: What are the differences in the kinds of learning and social media sites used by female and male undergraduate students of O.A.U?

The following are the different social media sites used and visited by the male and female Students.

i. Research and school work

A male respondent from the Faculty of Arts, Department of Dramatic Arts, 300 level said: *“I use the internet for research, I visit Academia to download textbooks, I visit google for research I also visit thescribe.net.nz”*

Another male respondent from the same faculty and department who is a 400-level student said:

“I use the internet to learn about my field, search on colours, blocking, and pictures on theater. I visit google to learn for instance how to make jewelries made with cowries

and other things on production because I'm a theater director."

In comparison to this, a female respondent from the same faculty and department, 100 level said:

"...to check meaning of important things for research. I use chrome, google."

However, a male respondent from Faculty of Environmental Design and Management, Department of Fine and Applied Arts, 300 level said:

"I use the Internet to check on art works, I visit Google to search for references on drawing. References like pictures of a lady, men and ideas"

Another male respondent from Faculty of Environmental Design and Management, Department of Fine and Applied Arts, 400 level said:

"I visit Google, Mozilla Firefox, Wikipedia, internet explorer, chrome I use it to learn about my artwork on designs"

A male respondent from the same faculty and department, 400 level said...

" I make use of Instagram to gather information on my field of study and find information relating to artistry. I also use it to inspire minds and use it to get opinions from others when they post their comments."

Another male respondent from the Department of Fine and Applied Arts reported learning such skills as "graphics design", "how to create page for an online community", "Photoshop", "how to edit

videos" "how to use and recover lost document on SPSS."

Another female respondent from Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development. 400 level said:

"I use the internet for schoolwork and assignment given by my lecturer..., I visit Google, opera mini and chrome. I follow Agro-Base site to learn about new updates on agriculture"

Similar to this, a male respondent from the Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, 300 level said:

"I use the internet for research into different areas in my field of study, I visit book site like Smashword.com, Amazon, freebooks.net to download books."

"I use the internet to access past questions and solutions and ways to successfully pass an exam."

Another male respondent from the Institute of Education, Faculty of Education 300 level said:

"I use Wikipedia to read for assignment and research, I also use google."

Another female from the Institute of Education, used the internet as an educational tool and said:

"I use the internet to learn new vocabularies",

This shows that the respondents use the internet for research particularly related to

their field of study; they also use it to carry out assignments given to them in class. They view the internet as a tool that houses information and provides communication facilities needed for their fields of study.

ii. Self-development

From the data collected it is observed that the internet is also a tool used for self-improvement and the development of the human body and mind. Some of the respondents use it to develop themselves, for instance a male respondent from Dramatic Arts 400 level said:

“I use the internet...to learn things on production because I’m a theater director.”

He sees the internet as a place where he can learn how to improve on his production skills and how he can become a better director.

Also, a female respondent from Faculty of Arts, Dramatic Arts department, 100 level said:

“I visit concoction site to learn about herbal mixing for the body, I also visit music site to learn how to play saxophone better, I also visit physical fitness sites. I visit google ... if I want to learn anything new.”

It is observed that this respondent uses the internet to develop both the body, brain and mind. She sees the internet has a fertile ground for learning and self-development.

Another female respondent from Fine and Applied Arts Department also uses the internet to develop herself, she said:

“I use Google mostly to learn new things about clothing and textiles.”

Another female respondent from Department of Agricultural Extension reported learning culinary skills on the internet...

“I use the internet for “cooking skills, “how to cook Nigerian concoction rice” and “how to make African cuisines”.

The internet is also a place for survey where findings can be done. A male respondent from Faculty of Arts, Department of Dramatic Arts, 200 level sees it as a place to find out if his audience are satisfied with the services he renders; he said:

“I do survey online. I visit Safari, Google and find out how people like the service I render to them, because I’m a comedian “

iii. Relaxation

The internet is also a site for recreational activities, and it is also used to kill stress. It is used for leisure by some respondents.

A male respondent from Faculty of Environmental Design and Management, Department of Fine and Applied Arts, 400 level says:

“I visit Google, opera mini, UC browser, chrome, Wikipedia... for fun, to play games and also learn about new and different kinds of games.”

He sees the internet as a stress reduction site where he can be in a relaxed atmospheric condition.

Also, a male respondent from Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Agricultural

Extension and Rural Development, 300 level said:

“I visit book site like Smashword.com, Amazon, freebooks.net to read and download books. And football sites to watch football.”

On the other hand, the female respondents had a different perspective to the use of social media. A female respondent from Faculty of Arts, Department of Dramatic Arts 200 level shared her take on how she uses social media:

“I visit Instagram and snapchat to post pictures, videos and also like pictures and videos posted by people. I also use Twitter to keep up with day-to-day happenings and I have been able to learn new things...”

iv. Vocational and occupational skills

It was also established that students both male and female use the internet to acquire different kinds of vocational skills. These included “photography”, “fashion design and skills”, “cutting and sewing clothes”, “hairstyling and hair care”, “how to do make-overs, drawing perfect eyebrow”, “baking and cake decoration”.

For example, a male respondent from Department of Fine and Applied Arts 300 level said:

“I love using WhatsApp for communication and learning. I learn how to design bags and sepulture making...”

v. Business

Not only is the internet used for research and academic work, relaxation and self-development, but it is also used as a means of generating income; it is used as a source of making money for some respondents as they use it to advertise and promote their businesses. Through the internet they create awareness programmes, and they also seek for new sources of income. Many respondents learnt “how to make money through WhatsApp”, make money online, “developing business ideas, online business, products advertisement, awareness and publicity etc.

A female respondent from Department of Dramatic Arts, 200 level said:

“I use the internet to get information, read news. I visit NNU, Opera mini, google... and through NNU I get money.”

It is observed that this respondent makes use of the Nigerian News Update which is a website designed for entertainments purposes, reading current news as well as lifestyles gist and all. So, instead of NNU being just a go and read website like others are, the CEO (Paul Samson) came up with the idea of turning it to a revenue sharing and earning website. Now, it is used as a source of income.

Another male respondent from Institute of Education, 300 level said:

“I use Opera Mini, Google Chrome and also Internet Explorer. And I’ve learnt a lot from using them. On Google Chrome, you can download the job application form from there and use it to apply.”

This male respondent uses the internet to seek for jobs opportunities and purchase employment forms online.

Another Male respondent from Department of Dramatic Arts 400level said:

” I visit Twitter a lot because it keeps me really updated with news and happenings from all over the world. I also make use of Pinterest for pasteurization and YouTube to learn more on sculpting.”

Another female respondent from Institute of Education, 400 level said:

“I’m addicted to YouTube, I watch a lot of makeup videos and that because I’m a makeup artist and so I watch how to make some delicacies like pizza, sharwama and so on...”

In addition, a female respondent from the Institute of Education, 100 level said:

“Honestly, I have learnt a whole lot. I am a natural hair stylist and I learnt that on social media, I have learnt how to tie gele, learnt soft skill like personal branding and I’ve learnt how to be a paper stylist from watching videos on YouTube. I am practically self-thought.”

vi. Finding Scholarships

The internet is used to find out about scholarship opportunities from far and wide.

A female respondent from Department of Agriculture Extension and Rural Development, 400 level said:

“I use the internet to learn about and find scholarship opportunities, I use google and chrome, I use chrome to search for scholarship through ADS, because I think it is the best site for scholarship, I have gained like 3 scholarships on internet due to my searching. Recently I gained a scholarship in Canada for three months through the internet.”

“I use the internet to look for scholarship opportunities, how to apply for scholarships.”

The internet is used to gain mastery in a particular field of study. It is also used for fun and recreational activities. In fact, it is used in every aspect of life.

vii. Other things learnt.

Other areas of self-development were also sports. A few respondents also said they learnt how to play badminton and chess. Few respondents learnt how not to underestimate themselves and various aspects of life. Also, in the area of interpersonal relationship, some of the respondents said they learnt how to love, trust, keep intimacy and relationship, to be more social and how to get a boy to notice you amongst others.

Talking about religious lessons, one of the respondents also claimed to have learnt godliness and Islamic facts. Moreover, several respondents learnt soft skills like, communication skills and writing skills like report and creative writing. Other respondents learnt facts and discoveries, historical happenings, historical documentations, knowing my role models, travel and tour, as well as slang and trending issues.

From the interview conducted among the undergraduates of Obafemi Awolowo University, the research shows that there are differences between the social media used and visited by the male and female gender. The male respondents make use of Telegram, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, WhatsApp, because most of the male participants were more concerned with news and updates from around the world, sports, art, academic activities and business expansion; so, these influence their choice of social media, and they tend to use social media for these purposes. Most female respondents on the other hand, make use of TikTok, Pinterest, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter because the female gender was more into posting and liking pictures and videos of themselves and celebrities, downloading of movies, learning skills, for fashion, meeting up with old friends on the internet, improving their personal relationship.

Research Question Two: What are the benefits and negative sides of these social media sites to the learning of undergraduate students of O.A.U?

Table 4: Benefits of using social media by O.A.U. students.

Use of social media	No of Respondents	Percent age
Information gaining and sharing	51	21.25
Chatting	38	15.83
Education	43	17.92
Business Purposes	16	6.66
Building connections	17	7.08
Research	53	22.08
Entertainment and relaxation	15	6.25
Others	07	2.92
Total	240	

With respect to this research question, it can be concluded that social media is relevant in the knowledge and skill acquisition of both male and female undergraduates. More of these benefits were revealed by the respondents through the help of the interview guide prepared for them.

The benefits of social media as regards to students' knowledge acquisition

A Male respondent from Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, 400 level said:

"...Before nko? Yes, now... social media has been of tremendous benefits to me. And as per my achievements, they are numerous o. I achieved new cooking skills from social media. And yes, I'm a good cook. Also pertaining to my poultry business and how to care for my farm animals, this has been achieved through social media. And I've also made lots of money from social media."

Another Male respondent from Department of Dramatic Arts, 400 level said:

"...Yes, it has. I have been able to stay connected to friends and family, business client and stay connected to what happens in the world. I have achieved a lot from social media, I use social media as a major means of publicity to make people know about my productions and to also tell them to watch it performed on stage. Social media has been a means of showcasing my God-giving talent."

The female undergraduates are also of the same opinion that social media is very beneficial to every aspect of their life. A female respondent from the Institute of Education of 100 level said:

"...of course, it has been beneficial. My achievements are the personal branding, paper styling and creative writing."

Also, a female from Department of Dramatic Art student 400 level said:

"...Yes, social media has helped to improve my fashion sense; it has also helped me to make new friends. I have been able to reach some of my goals relating to academics and socially, I have learnt new skills."

Also, social media is of great importance to some participants in that, it has help them to learn and master different trades and businesses. With social media, they have been able to achieve steady income for themselves, as different respondents said:

"Through social media I have learnt makeup, costume design and arts and crafts" (female, Department of Dramatic Arts, 100level)

"I have learnt how to make bag and solar installation" (Male, Department of Fine and Applied Art, 300 level)

"Well, I learnt how to do makeup and tie gele on YouTube. I'm not a professional makeup artist oh. but I can make up for myself and look good. Though I tie gele for people and make money sha" (Female Institute of Education, 200 level)

"Yes. I have learnt a business on social media and that is Personal Branding and Paper Styling" (Female, Institute of Education, 100 level)

Table 4 shows the negative sides of these social media sites to the students.

Table 5: Negative sides of social media use by O.A.U Students (n=240)

		No of Respondents	Percentage
Use of social media by the students			
I visit social media daily	Yes	195	81.9
I visit social media often	Yes	187	80.3
How many hours per day	<2hrs	08	3.33
	2 - 5hrs	25	10.4
	6 - 10 hrs.	66	27.5
	11 - 15 hrs.	34	14.1
	16 - 20 hrs.	34	14.1
	21 - 24 hrs.	32	13.3
Do you feel you spend too much time on social media	Yes	91	38.0
I find social media as a form of distraction	Yes	86	35.7
I find social media as being addictive	Yes	94	39.2

Among the respondents, 91 (38.0%) felt they spent too much time on social media, 86 (35.7%) find social media as a source of distraction and 94 (39.2%) find

social media as being additive. During the in-depth interview, other negative sides of social media use were highlighted by the respondents thus:

i. Inability to do without it

Some participants explained that they could not do without social media, as one said: *“I feel weird if I have not gone online in hours or when my phone dies”*. Another said: *“I just have to log in everyday”* One respondent affirmed: *“I feel it’s a part of me”*. While some others agreed that they: *“...can’t do without it...”*

ii. Too much time spent.

Talking about the time spent online, one respondent said, *“Most times when I determine to spend 30 minutes on maybe WhatsApp, I end up spending 3 – 4 hours.”* Another affirmed that *“I spend so much time on social media (even) when I am in the middle of an important task.”*

iii. Always online

One respondent replied that: *“24 hours, I am always on social media getting information about my client”*. While another said that: *“I stay online most times.”*

iv. procrastination

Commenting on the reason he feels social media is additive one responded: *“(Social Media) makes you leave some important things you are to do on time.”*

v. Distraction

Some other respondents affirm that the reason they think social media is addictive is because of the distraction it gives as one of them confessed that: *“It affects my focus on academics.”*

And another says that *“It doesn’t allow for concentration on important things”*. While some others said they *“sometimes get carried away”*. One emphatically said, *“I forget to do other things while on social media.”*

vi. Hard to stop

Another reason the respondents put forth is inability to stop once logged in as one of them said: *“you hardly want to leave”*. Another said that social media *“keeps making you watch more videos.”*

While another yet responded *“I find it hard to stop”*.

vii. Entertainment and relaxation

Respondents also confirm addiction to social media *“it reduces stress.”*

viii. Other reasons put forward include keeping people unnecessarily busy and the presence of smileys and emojis.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study show that undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, just like other students all over the world, use social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Goggle,

LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter and WhatsApp compulsively. Chen & Brayer 2010 cited in Rabia et al., (2019) asserted that regardless of the use of social media for private utilisation only short portion of undergraduates and departments have used them for educational exercises. Online social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter & Myspace are used on a regular foundation by many millions of youths This is also in line with findings of other scholars like Albert (2015), who found out that social networking sites have been used by the students to make new friends, send messages and view pictures, etc.

Findings show that both male and female respondents use the internet for learning in the areas of research and findings. Ellahi (2018) opined that, students found the use of social networking tool as helpful in their learning and it had a positive effect on their learning satisfaction and performance. Findings of this study further show that the students use social media for relaxation, entertainment, learning things about their surroundings and happenings all over the world; they use the internet to keep their minds informed and active. This may be why Ellison, et al., (2007), asserted that although social media sites had been recognised as an important resource for education today, studies had shown that student use social media such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc. to kill time, to meet existing

friends or to make new ones. They also use the internet sites for recreational activities and to kill stress. It is used for leisure by some respondents. Other studies show that students use social media sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, etc. to make friends and kill time (Ellison, et al., 2007).

On the purpose of using social media sites by O.A.U. students, four faculties participated in this study, and as much as there were common things learnt across the faculties, there were also faculty specific skills learnt on social media according to the respondents. Findings show that students used the social media sites visited for gaining and sharing information; chatting; education, business purposes; building connections; research; entertainment and relaxation and others. This is in line with findings of other researchers. For example, Sanchez, Cortijo, & Javed, (2014) found that students also used social networking sites to share study notes and discuss about the course material and work. In a study conducted by Barczyk & Duncan (2013), students confirmed that social media site like Facebook enhanced their experience of participation in their course. Moreover, Sorte & Rathod (2016), in their study showed that social networking sites had proved itself as an effective informal learning tool for medical students in an Indian medical university. It was extensively appreciated by students; they had described the experience

as “learning with fun”. They reported increase in their knowledge, easy way to reinforce knowledge, developed attitude toward self-learning and had increased online studies.

In Obafemi Awolowo University, on the contents of the male and female informal learning experiences, findings show that the male respondents make use of social media sites to learn different things which includes painting, online marketing, business advertisement, showcasing artistic works, generating income for themselves, graphic design and mechanical work as in Solar installation. This is in tandem with Ellahi’s (2018) opinion that the use of social networking sites provided the learners an opportunity to construct their knowledge and engage themselves in this learning process. In the context of social networking sites, students could construct their own knowledge, share and collaborate with their peers. They could see the progress of other students; thus, social aspect of learning was included in this technology. In this way, learning was an active process and student-centred approach was evident in this case.

However, the female respondents make use of social media sites to learn; hairstyling, how to tie gele (head tie), makeup, how to cook, design fabrics, photography, learning new dance steps and how to make herbal cosmetic products. In the same vein, Igarashi et al., 2005 opined that technologies used to

perform housework have an apparent historical connection to gender in many cultures; for example, telephone use has long had gendered connections ranging from the widespread assumptions that women talk more than men. Caldwell (2015) claimed that there has been very little research on the potential of using social networking sites in teaching and learning. Many previous researchers found that social networking sites had been used by the students only for social purposes. For example, in his study, Stern and Taylor (2007) and Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin (2008) found that social networking sites had been used by the students to make new friends, send messages and view pictures etc., Sanchez, Cortijo, & Javed, (2014) found that students also use social networking sites to share study notes and discuss about the course material and work. In a study conducted by Barczyk & Duncan (2013), students confirmed that “Facebook enhanced their experience of participation in their course. However, the learning experiences differ among both sexes. This shows that individual differences do not only affect the way human beings see and acknowledge things and situations, but it also affects their tastes and choices in aspects pertaining to their informal learning experiences. It also points to the assertion that men and women use social media differently and with different frequencies.

Male and female undergraduates use the aforementioned social media sites for some other different purposes; picture sharing tasks are very popular among females, and these include Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp status and Facebook (Dijck 2013). Female students use them for relationship maintenance and posting public pictures while male students use the internet for obtaining news, weather, and sports information. Whereas, Rabia et al., (2019) cited Jain et al. (2012) who explained that the survey elucidates that men spend more time as compared to women on social networking sites to review the current social issues and yet women are very sensitive to such issues.

Furthermore, this study has shown that there are social media sites specific to both sexes and the knowledge they acquire from these sites differ between them. Not only are there sites characterised as feminine and masculine, but there are also gender differences in respect to the aims and purposes that these undergraduates are trying to achieve. This is also like the findings of Igarashi et al., (2005) that women tend to self-disclose more to their good friends and tend to be more sociable and sensitive, have more intimate social networks and more actively involved in intimate conversation than males. Females would also form stable relationships than males, because socio-emotion-oriented networks develop bonds

that build solid relationships. Males are most likely to spend time in common activities and paper tasks-oriented social networks, Majority of the male and female respondents make use of WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Telegram, LinkedIn and Pinterest for their personal learning experiences. In contrast to both sexes making use of almost the same sites, there are differences in motive for the usage of social media. For Igarashi et al., 2005, gender difference is an obvious aspect of social media as observation shows that they simultaneously play different roles in various interconnected social networks, such as friendship networks, communication networks, family networks or business networks. The male respondents can be seen making use of social media to get job opportunities, worldwide news update, sports news, education research, communication and for generating income. This establishes the assertion made by Weiser (2000) that “men use the internet for obtaining news, weather, and sport information; shopping and entertaining”. While the female respondents had an entirely different use for social media, the female respondents interviewed, made use of social media to keep tab on friends, post pictures, download movies, creative writing and follow celebrities. This is in line with the observation of Igarashi et al., 2005, that female gender has been associated with

extensive and trivial use of telephone for purely social purpose and that females seem to use social media more explicitly for social connections. This point to what Jones, Millermaier, Goya-Martinez & Schuler (2008) that “women are most likely to have expression of friendship specifically in areas of publishing photos of their friends and writing poems”.

In view of the analysis on the benefits of social media as regards to students’ knowledge acquisition, it was revealed that social media usage plays a significant role in the acquisition of knowledge among male and female undergraduates. Ellahi (2018), concluded that, overall, the students found the use of social networking tool helpful in their learning and it had a positive effect on their learning satisfaction and performance. The results of the study carried out by Rabia, et.al., (2020) revealed that social networking sites have the positive as well as negative impact on youth and it is suggested that government and private institutions both should have to work to promote social media’s positive activities among youth. Rabia et al., (2020) cited lucky (2013) who described that social media as a means of connection among people in which they exchange, create and share information and thoughts in virtual communities and networks.

Sorte & Rathod (2016) studied the effectiveness of popular social networking

sites as an informal learning tool and found out that at the end of study an exam was conducted and when the student's feedback was obtained, exam results showed improvement in students' knowledge which was statistically significant where 81.25% of students ranked social networking sites as an effective learning tool. In the same vein, Sorte and Rathod (2016) asserted that social networking sites helped to engage users for online discussion, which imparts easy posting and sharing of topic and serves real-time, dynamic platform to allow course-related discussion that facilitates active learning. As compared to learning in classroom, which is passive, social networking sites enhanced active learning out of interest. Active learning helps students to retain more knowledge and outperform students who learn passively in classrooms. It promotes self-directed learning (Sorte & Rathod, 2016).

About the negative sides of these social media sites to the students, studies that students described social media as a source of distraction and additive and they spend too much time on it and can hardly do without it. Rabia et al., (2019) Youngsters are highly addicted to social media sites as they spend a lot of time on the internet to update status on these social sites, select a picture to change their profile picture, post on walls, and even whatever they make. They make their standard of popularity by

their "Likes", the more they have "Likes" they consider that they are more popular with people. In the same vein, Rabia et al., (2019) examined the impact of media on the student's academic performance. The data was collected using questionnaire and analysed through statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The results demonstrate that 183 (67%) respondents agreed that students waste much time on social media. Findings further revealed that students find social media usage hard to stop. This might be in line with part of Yousaf, Rabia, Shajhan, & Liaqat's (2019) conclusion where they investigated that technology could have large impact on user's mental and physical health. The data was collected using survey method and sample of 373 students from GC Women University Sialkot. The significant results show that technology has positive effect as well as negative effects on the youth.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, social media sites are of great importance to one's learning experiences seeing that everything cannot be learnt within the four walls of a classroom. Also, different social media sites have been designed to suit the taste of different sexes with their own learning experiences.

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