



Assessment of Undergraduate Student's Perception on Social Media Devices as a Learning Tool among Public Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined undergraduates' perception of social media as a learning tool in public universities in Southwest, Nigeria. It was guided by 4 research questions. A descriptive research design was used. The population comprised undergraduates of Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State and Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, (TASFUED) Ijagun, Ogun State, Nigeria. The sample size was 250 undergraduates from Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State and Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State, Nigeria. These were selected using stratified sampling technique. In that situation, 150 undergraduates were selected from OOU and 100 from TASFUED. A self-research-designed instrument tagged Undergraduates' Perception of Social-Media and Learning Tool Questionnaire (UPSMLTQ) was used for data collection with ($r = .82$) as reliability coefficient of the instrument. Mean and standard deviation were used for answering research questions 1. Research questions 2, 3 and 4 were analyses using inferential statistics of regression analysis. The findings of the study revealed that undergraduates positively perceive impact of social media on cognitive learning ($\beta = .371$, $t = 8.852$, $P < .05$) and that undergraduate perceived impact of social media on emotional learning ($\beta = .284$, $t = 6.568$, $P < .05$). It was recommended that utilize social media to connect with peers for academic purposes, such as forming study groups, discussing course content, and sharing educational resources, rather than solely for entertainment.

Keywords: Undergraduate, Perception, Social Media, Learning Tool, Public Universities

Introduction

Undergraduate pursue learning in universities for a combination of professional, personal, and societal reasons. These reasons range from gaining specialised knowledge for specific careers to developing essential life skills and contributing to the community. In short, learning in university is a multifaceted process of gaining knowledge, skills, and critical thinking through structured courses (lectures, seminars) and independent study, focusing not just on facts but on "learning how to learn" for lifelong adaptability, involving cognitive processes, social interaction, and building on prior experience to construct new understanding. It's about changing how undergraduate think, solve problems, and interpret the world, moving from passive reception to active construction and application of knowledge. In essence, university learning transforms undergraduate into an independent, critical thinker capable of continuous learning and adapting to new challenges. Learning among undergraduates in a university offers substantial personal, professional, and societal benefits and these benefits range from developing core life skills and expanding career opportunities to increasing lifelong earning potential and fostering civic engagement (Nuhu, 2021). Egbe et al. (2024) were of the opinions that learning benefits undergraduate by boosting critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, while also fostering independence, confidence, and adaptability for future careers and life challenges, leading to better job prospects, personal growth, and a more informed, engaged life. It sharpens the mind, improves communication, promotes well-being, and makes life more meaningful by offering new perspectives and skills. However, the issues eroding the quality of learning in universities stem from a variety of interconnected financial, technological, social, and structural challenges. These problems affect student engagement, the development of core academic skills, and the overall value of a degree (Umar, 2023). Undergraduate learning could be behavioural, cognitive and emotional which could transfer to quality learning. Behavioural learning or behaviorism, explains learning as a change in observable behaviour resulting from environmental interactions, particularly

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through conditioning and reinforcement (rewards or punishments). It focuses on external stimuli and responses, rather than internal mental states, suggesting behaviours are learned habits that can be shaped and modified by consequences (Sanga, 2025). Behavioural learning views individuals undergraduate as responding to their surroundings, learning to act in ways that yield positive outcomes and avoid negative ones. Cognitive learning is an active, mental process where learners engage their brains to understand, process, and connect new information with existing knowledge, going beyond simple memorization to build deeper comprehension, better memory, and problem-solving skills. It focuses on internal mental activities like thinking, remembering, and understanding, making learning more meaningful and long-lasting by training individuals to learn *how* to learn. Emotional learning, often called Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), is the process of gaining skills to understand and manage own emotions, develop empathy for others, build healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions, improving personal well-being and academic success by connecting feelings to actions and navigating life's challenges effectively. It's a holistic approach focused on five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, crucial for thriving in school, work, and community (Umar, 2023). Universities globally, including in Nigeria now begins to mandate the usage of technology-driven in learning with the view to prepared undergraduate for future work and employability. The use of social media is also among the viable technology's tools adopted for learning among the undergraduate. Social media refers to the websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. It also entailed internet-based platforms (websites and apps) enabling users to create, share, and exchange content, ideas, and messages, fostering virtual communities and connections through features like profiles, posts, and interactive tools. It's a form of digital communication focused on user-generated content and participation, encompassing everything from social networking (Facebook) to video sharing (YouTube) and microblogging (Twitter) (Iheanacho & Amomoh, 2025).

Social media for learning enhance collaboration, access vast resources, boost engagement, develop digital skills, and connect with peers/experts, transforming passive learning into active participation through shared content, discussions, and real-time support outside traditional classrooms (Du & Faridah, 2024). It facilitates deeper understanding, quick information exchange, and global awareness, although managing distractions and reliable sources remains crucial. Social media can aid quality learning among undergraduates by facilitating enhanced communication, collaboration, resource sharing, and engagement, thereby extending educational opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting. Platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook allow for real-time communication between undergraduates and lecturer, enabling undergraduates to ask questions, receive quick feedback, and discuss course topics outside of formal class hours (Ting et al., 2024). Social media provides access to supplementary educational materials, such as video tutorials (YouTube), academic articles (LinkedIn, ResearchGate), and expert opinions from around the world. This diverse range of content enriches the learning experience beyond standard textbooks. Incorporating social media, which undergraduates use daily, can make learning more interactive and engaging. The use of multimedia content and interactive elements helps cater to different learning styles and keeps students interested in the material. By using social media for academic purposes, undergraduates develop essential digital skills and learn how to discern credible sources from misinformation, which prepares them for success in a technology-driven world. Social media helps build a sense of community among undergraduates with shared interests, enabling them to connect with peers and experts globally, which broadens their perspectives and intellectual horizons. Learning activities on social media can be accessed anytime and from anywhere, which is particularly beneficial for undergraduates with diverse schedules or those who cannot physically attend classes (Adegboyega, 2020). Social media can effectively aid behavioural learning primarily through social learning (observational learning), collaboration and peer interaction, and access to diverse educational resources. These platforms provide environments where undergraduate can observe, interact, and practice new behaviors and skills. Drawing on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, undergraduate can learn by observing others' actions and the consequences that follow. When users see others being rewarded or praised for positive behaviours (e.g., sharing academic success, promoting social causes, showcasing creativity), they are more motivated to emulate those actions (Essien, 2025). Educational content creators (like popular YouTube educators or academic pages on Instagram) serve as digital role models, breaking down complex topics in engaging ways that students can observe and learn from. In short, social media breaks down traditional classroom barriers, facilitating continuous learning through peer-based collaboration and communication outside of formal settings. In another way, social media can aid cognitive learning by facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing,

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enhancing language skills, providing access to a wide array of educational resources, and fostering critical thinking when used in a structured, purposeful manner (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2023). Social media platforms allow undergraduates to form online study groups, share resources, discuss ideas, and work together on projects, effectively expanding the learning environment beyond the traditional classroom. This peer interaction and feedback can enhance teamwork and problem-solving skills. The interactive and dynamic nature of social media can increase undergraduates' engagement and motivation.

Statement of the Problem

Ideally, quality learning among undergraduates should provide extensive benefits, equipping them with essential career skills, promoting personal development, enhancing financial stability, and fostering an engaged, responsible citizenry. However, problems such as time management, mental health, academic preparedness and inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and curriculum issues have been reported in literature to be among issues confronting learning. Observations have revealed that a significant rise in undergraduates' anxiety, depression, and stress, often due to academic and financial pressures, can impede concentration and hinder learning. Many undergraduates work full or part-time jobs to cover the high costs of tuition and living expenses, which negatively impacts the time they can dedicate to their studies and is a primary reason for low level of quality learning. However, traditional learning in a university is a lecturer-centric, face-to-face instruction model that typically takes place within a physical classroom or lecture hall. The core focus is on the efficient transmission of a large, structured body of knowledge from lecturer to undergraduates, often through lecturer and heavy reliance on textbooks. This method of learning is passive learning (lectures), lack of critical thinking/creativity, rote memorization over understanding, lecturer-centric focus, limited personalization, outdated content, poor real-world application, and difficulty adapting to modern tech/needs, leading to disengaged undergraduate unprepared for dynamic careers. This method often stifles undergraduate-led inquiry and practical skills development. Although, many arguments have been putting forward as the reason for low level of learning among undergraduates in a university. Thus, this study was an attempt to examine undergraduates' perception of social media as a learning tool in public universities in Southwest, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine undergraduates' perception of social media as a learning tool in public universities in Southwest, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. identify undergraduates' perception of social media as a learning tool;
2. examine undergraduates perceived impact of social media on behavioural learning;
3. determine undergraduates perceived impact of social media on cognitive learning;

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the undergraduates' perceptions of social media as a learning tool?
2. What is the undergraduate perceived impact of social media on behavioural learning?
3. To what extent does undergraduates perceive impact of social media on cognitive learning?

Theoretical Framework

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) was postulated by Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz in 1974. Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) posits that media audiences are active, not passive, users who intentionally select media (like TV, social media, news) to satisfy specific psychological and social needs, such as information, personal identity, social connection, or entertainment/diversion. Instead of asking "What does media do to people?", UGT asks, "What do people do with media?" focusing on *why* they choose certain content and what gratifications they get, viewing users as goal-oriented individuals with free will. Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) explains that undergraduates actively choose social media to fulfill specific needs (gratifications), moving beyond passive consumption to satisfy goals like information-seeking, social-connection, self-expression, entertainment, academic support (finding study groups, clarifying concepts), or even escaping study stress, with their motivation dictating platform choice (e.g., WhatsApp for quick chats, YouTube for tutorials, Facebook for groups).



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According to the theory, undergraduates are not just bombarded by social media; they intentionally select platforms and content to meet personal needs; the why (motivation) is key: undergraduates use media to achieve something, whether it's a good grade or a break, different needs lead to different media choices. And that U&G views students as empowered users who tailor their social media use to achieve their academic and personal goals, making them active participants in their own educational media experience.

Relevance of the theory to the Study

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) explains that undergraduates can gain quality learning from social media when they actively and intentionally use these platforms to satisfy specific academic, informational, and social needs. This theory shifts focus from the media's effect on users to the user's power to choose media based on their own goals. UGT is relevant because it provides a framework to understand and leverage undergraduates' motivations for engaging with social media in an educational context. By understanding *why* undergraduates use these platforms, lecturers can design learning strategies that channel these existing motivations toward positive academic outcomes. Also, a major driver for social media use is the need for social connection and community building. This can be channeled into quality learning by facilitating online study groups, peer collaboration on projects, and discussions with classmates and instructors outside formal class hours, leading to enhanced engagement and social support. Furthermore, social media offers immediate access and flexible communication, which undergraduates value highly. This convenience can make learning more fluid and accessible, allowing for quick Q&A sessions and constant access to learning materials. Social media allows individuals to express opinions and aspects of their identity. In an academic setting, this can be leveraged through activities like contributing to class blogs or participating in discussions, which can help students form a academic identity and gain recognition for their contributions. The theory suggests that to achieve "quality learning," the gratifications sought must align with the gratifications obtained. If a student seeks entertainment but finds quality learning instead, their initial gratification is not met, potentially leading to dissatisfaction. Conversely, if a undergraduate explicitly seeks academic information and finds it effectively, they are more likely to continue using the platform for learning. Thus, ultimately, UGT highlights that undergraduates are active agents in their education and their learning through social media is most effective when their intrinsic motivations and needs are intentionally integrated into the pedagogical process.

Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of this study comprised undergraduates of Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State and Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, (TASFUED) Ijagun, Ogun State, Nigeria. The sample size was 250 undergraduates from Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State and Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State, Nigeria. These were selected using stratified sampling technique. In that situation, 150 undergraduates were selected from OOU and 100 from TASFUED. A self-research-designed instrument tagged Undergraduates' Perception of Social-Media and Learning Tool Questionnaire (UPSMLTQ) was used for this study. UPSMLTQ was used for the collection of data from the respondents on the undergraduates' perception of social media as a learning tool, impact of social media on behavioural learning; impact of social media on cognitive learning and impact of social media on emotional learning. The questionnaire requested responses on a four (4) – point scale format which was a modification of 5-point Likert scale. To ensure the face and content validity of the instrument, copies of the instrument were given to an expert in the Department of Educational Technology, Tai Solarin Federal University of Education. Reliability test of the instrument (UPSMLTQ) was done using a test-retest method. In this case, copies of the instrument (UPSMLTQ) were administered twice on 25 undergraduates from the Faculty of Education, Lagos State University of Education (LASUED), that were not part of the sample size within a week interval. The collected data from the dual administration of the instruments were compared using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and reliability coefficient yield ($r = .82$). Primary method of data collection was used in this study. Primary method includes the usage of questionnaire to collect data from the identified respondents. However, an introduction letter was collected from the Head of Department, Department of Educational Technology, TASFUED and presented to the case study area to show the researcher's mission and reasons for conducting the study. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used for answering research questions 1. Research questions 2, and 3 were analyses using inferential statistics of regression analysis.

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Presentation of the Results

Research Question 1: What are the undergraduates' perceptions of social media as a learning tool?

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on the undergraduates' perceptions of social media as a learning tool

Items	Mean	SD
I believed social media fostering collaboration.	3.11	.678
I know that social media way to access to information.	3.02	.777
Social media aid effective communication.	2.99	.901
Social media aid my diverse resources.	2.79	.789
I perceived that social media provides diverse, up-to-date content.	3.16	.837
Cluster Mean	3.01	

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 showed that cluster mean was 3.01 and bench mark mean reported as 2.50. Since, $3.01 > 2.50$. This implied that undergraduates; perceived social media to fostering collaboration, access to information, aid effective communication, diverse resources and up-to-date content.

Research Question 2: What is the undergraduate perceived impact of social media on behavioural learning?

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on the perceived impact of social media on behavioural learning

Items	Mean	SD
I perceived that social media is altering attention.	2.66	.874
I perceived self-esteem through social comparison.	2.84	.773
I perceived that social media shaping social skills (both positively for connection and negatively for empathy),	2.88	.804
I perceived that social media affecting emotional regulation.	2.83	.833
I perceived that social media increasing susceptibility to misinformation.	2.74	
Cluster Mean	2.79	

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2 showed that cluster mean was 2.79 and bench mark mean value 2.50. Since, $2.79 > 2.50$, this implied that undergraduates perceived social media as is altering attention, aid self-esteem, shaping social skills (both positively for connection and negatively for empathy), affecting emotional regulation and increasing susceptibility to misinformation.

Research Question 3: To what extent does undergraduates perceive impact of social media on cognitive learning?

Table 3: Extent does undergraduates perceive impact of social media on cognitive learning

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	22.302	1.113		20.033	.000
Social media	.341	.039	.371	8.852	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Cognitive learning

Table 3 showed that the sign of the coefficient of social media is positive which implied that an increase or improvement in it will increase undergraduates cognitive learning. The independent variable was found to be significant and strongly determine undergraduates cognitive learning with the P-value less than 0.05 and magnitude of social media ($\beta = .371$, $t = 8.852$, $P < .05$). This implied that undergraduates positively perceive impact of social media on cognitive learning.

Discussion of Findings

The research question 1 showed that undergraduates; perceived social media to fostering collaboration, access to information, aid effective communication, diverse resources and up-to-date content. These findings were in correlate with Egbe et al. (2024) who found that social media aids undergraduate learning by fostering collaboration, providing access to diverse educational resources, and improving engagement through interactive, bite-sized content. Platforms like YouTube, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn facilitate study groups, peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, and networking, ultimately enhancing academic performance when used responsibly. The research question 2 revealed that undergraduates perceived social media as is altering attention, aid self-esteem, shaping social skills (both positively for connection and negatively for empathy), affecting emotional regulation and increasing susceptibility to misinformation. These findings were in tandem with Umar (2023) who agreed that social media aids knowledge sharing among undergraduates



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by facilitating interactive, peer-to-peer, and collaborative learning through platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter. These tools enhance academic performance, allow for real-time discussion of course materials, and enable easy exchange of information beyond the classroom, fostering both formal and informal knowledge transfer. The research question 3 showed that undergraduates positively perceive impact of social media on cognitive learning ($\beta = .371$, $t = 8.852$, $P < .05$). These findings were in correlate with Nuhu (2021) focused who concurred that social media served as tools that can aid undergraduates cognitive learning for flexible learning. And Sanga (2025) found that social media aids undergraduate cognitive learning by transforming the learning environment into a more interactive, collaborative, and accessible space, fostering higher-order thinking, and enabling personalized knowledge construction. It supports both formal and informal learning through peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and increased engagement.

Conclusion

This study examined undergraduates' perception of social media as a learning tool in public universities in south-west, Nigeria and concluded that social media served as tool that can aid cognitive and emotional learning among undergraduates.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were raised in line with the findings of the study:

1. Utilize social media to connect with peers for academic purposes, such as forming study groups, discussing course content, and sharing educational resources, rather than solely for entertainment.
2. Department should create and use closed Facebook Groups or WhatsApp groups to foster a sense of community, allow for peer-to-peer support, and facilitate real-time, informal, and open discussion, which can increase participation among shy students.
3. Utilize platforms like WhatsApp for instant Q & A sessions, sharing resources, and quick feedback from instructors, breaking the barriers of traditional, limited office hours.
4. Use specific Twitter hashtags to organize class discussions, live chats during lectures, and connect with broader professional networks.
5. Lecturers should use platforms with social features (e.g., Slack, Discord, Google Classroom) for group assignments, allowing students to work together from anywhere and share multimedia content.

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